



MUSSOLINI The Fascist Era

10
DESMOND GREGORY

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

N. 5993 -

Signor Ambasciatore,

Ho presente il tenore delle conversazioni da me avute a Roma il 24 e 25 giugno scorso con il Signor Eden, Ministro del Regno Unito per gli Affari relativi alla Società delle Nazioni.

Posso assicurarLa che anche prima di tali conversazioni mi ero ben reso conto delle preoccupazioni nutrite dal Governo britannico circa gli sviluppi del dissidio tra l'Italia e l'Abissinia e del carattere di tali preoccupazioni. Non ho mai pensato che queste fossero determinate esclusivamente dalla necessità di tutelare interessi britannici in Africa giacchè ero, come sono, sicuro che il Governo britannico da parte sua non ha mai perduto di vista non soltanto l'amicizia che ha unito sin qui il popolo inglese a quello italiano, ma anche le necessità incoercibili del popolo italiano, riconosciute dallo stesso Signor Hoare nel suo recente discorso, e così pure la solidarietà che si è sempre affermata tra interessi britannici e interessi italiani in Africa, solidarietà cementata più volte perfino sui campi di battaglia.

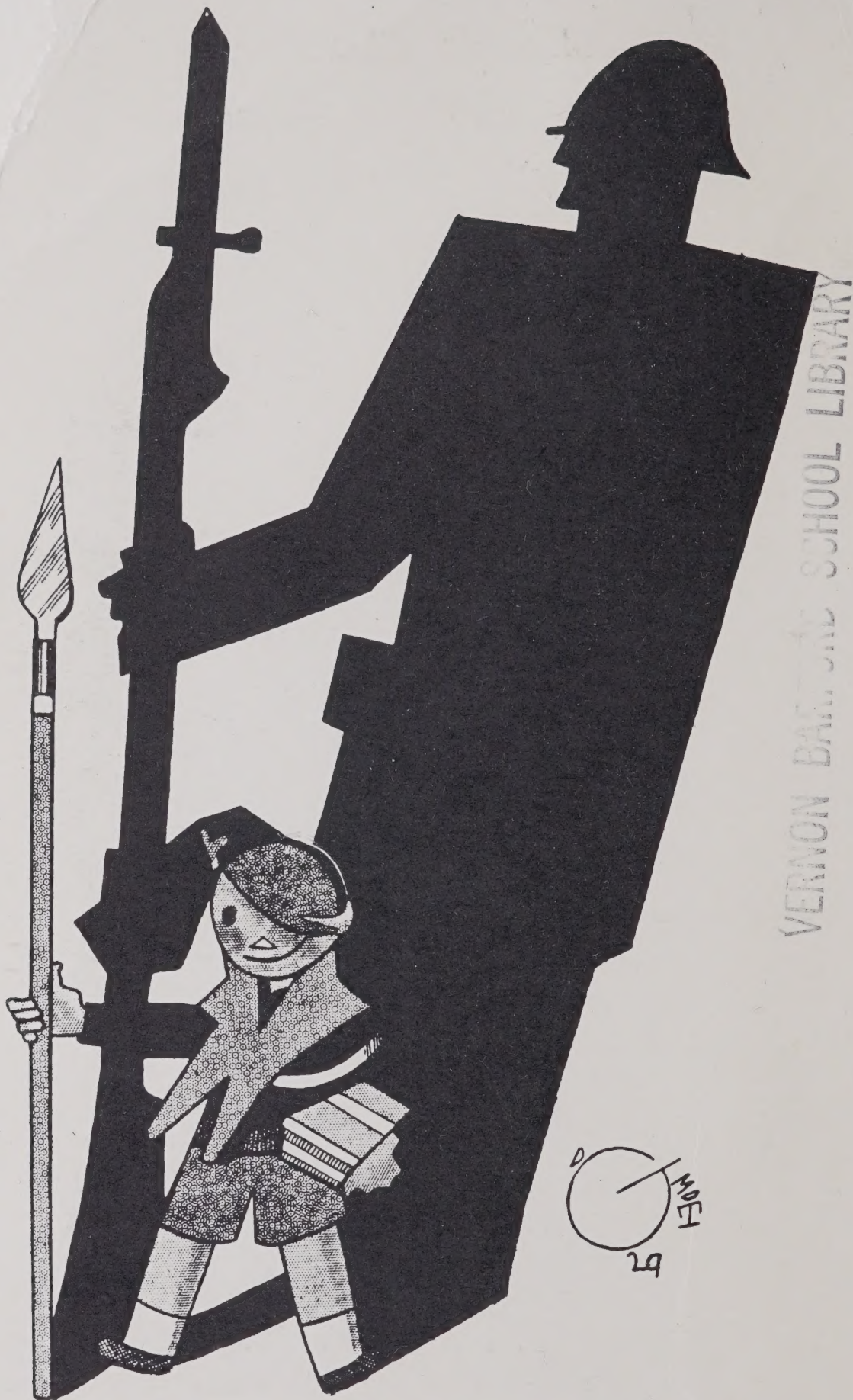
A Sua Eccellenza
Sir Eric DRUMMOND
Ambasciatore di S.M. Britannica

./.

THE ARCHIVE SERIES

Hill and Fell

DG
575
M8
G82
c.2
BARD



VERNON BARTON SCHOOL LIBRARY

The two illustrations reproduced here are crude Fascist propaganda cartoons which appeared in textbooks issued to children in Italian primary schools.

In the one above, the child is seen both as the father of the soldier he is to grow into (the shadow cast) and at the same time growing up under the protective shadow of the soldier.

BENITO MUSSOLINI
ama molto i bambini.
I bimbi d'Italia amano
molto il Duce.

VIVA IL DUCE!

Saluto al Duce:

A noi!



In this one, the child is encouraged to look to Mussolini as a benevolent father-figure, whom he is to learn to greet with the popular Fascist cries of adulation: "Long Live the Leader!", "Greet the Leader!", "He is ours!"



EX LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTÆNSIS

THE ARCHIVE SERIES

General Editors: C. P. Hill and G. H. Fell

Mussolini and the Fascist Era

Desmond Gregory

History Master, Downside School, Bath

Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd. London



© Desmond Gregory 1968
First published 1968
Reprinted 1970

SBN: 7131 1518 1

THE ARCHIVE SERIES

at present contains the following titles

Disraeli and Conservatism *by* Robin Grinter.
Lenin and the Russian Revolutions *by* F. W. Stacey.
British Imperialism in the Late 19th Century *by* L. R. Gardiner and
J. H. Davidson.
The Liberals and the Welfare State *by* R. D. H. Seaman.
Mussolini and the Fascist Era *by* Desmond Gregory.
Hitler and the Rise of the Nazis *by* D. M. Phillips.
The General Strike, 1926 *by* C. L. Mowat.
Britain and Russia from the Crimean to the Second World War *by*
F. W. Stacey.
The Rise of the Labour Party in Great Britain *by* G. R. Smith.
Stalin *by* F. W. Stacey.
British Trade Unionism, 1850-1914 *by* L. W. Evans.
Bismarck and the Unification of Germany *by* A. R. C. Hewison.

Further titles are in preparation.

*Printed in Great Britain by
Cox & Wyman Ltd., London, Reading and Fakenham*


PB
746

General Preface

The aim of the Archive Series is to provide historical source material suitable for use in secondary schools. Today it is widely and strongly felt to be right to introduce school students of history, in some elementary way, to the raw materials of the subject. The booklets in this series will provide selections of material on historical topics in a form suitable for students of fifteen to seventeen years of age. Each topic has been selected for its interest and importance. The material ranges widely: extracts from newspapers, letters, speeches, diaries, treaties, novels, statutes, and autobiographies are all represented.

Teachers, we imagine, will find the booklets useful in various ways: as a means to enrich a syllabus, as a supplement to textbooks, as the basis for elementary investigation of sources themselves, as illustrations of policies or attitudes, or merely as an occasional change from the normal routine. The series has a uniform format for ease of reference, but the author of each booklet has adopted his own plan of approach. We hope that the series will stimulate interest and increase understanding.

C. P. H.
G. H. F.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2021 with funding from
University of Alberta Libraries

Contents

Introduction	7
1. The Rise of Fascism	11
2. The Doctrine of Fascism	13
3. Benito Mussolini	16
4. Fascism and Violence	19
5. The Fascist Party and the State and its Citizens	21
6. Fascist Social and Economic Policy	26
7. Church and State	31
8. Parliament, Institutions and Government	35
9. The War in Abyssinia	39
10. The Italo-German Alliance	45
11. The Second World War	48
12. The Fall of Mussolini and of the Fascist Régime	51
13. The Salò Republic—Epilogue to Fascism	55
Sources of Extracts	63

Acknowledgments

Detailed sources for each extract are given at the end of the book.

We would also like to thank the following for their permission to reprint copyright material:

Curtis Brown Ltd (Extracts 27, 28); The Paul Hamlyn Group (Extracts 3, 8, 25); Longmans Green and Co. Ltd. (Extract 10).

Endpapers: Professor Herman Finer
Punch Magazine.

Cover: The first and last pages of this autograph document from Mussolini are reproduced by kind permission of the Public Record Office. Crown Copyright.

Introduction

This collection of documents is designed to introduce the student to the period of Italian history between 1919 and 1945, when the Kingdom of Italy was ruled by a ministry calling itself Fascist and headed by its 'Duce' or Leader—Benito Mussolini.

Italian Fascism as a political force was born of the nationwide disillusionment that followed the ending of the First World War. Italy had been among the victorious Powers who had defeated Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1918; yet the awards of the Peace Conference of 1919 seemed to yield to Italy the fruits of only 'a mutilated victory'. Italian parliamentary government was a feeble thing which inspired among Italians dislike and contempt. No party was strong enough to win power and yet post-war problems demanded action. Five governments of compromise filled the years between 1919 and 1922, and meanwhile, in the climate of economic discontent, law and order were being disregarded. Shops were looted and factories seized by workers, the propertied classes were becoming anxious about Bolshevism, and the Government appeared powerless or unwilling to act.

It was in this atmosphere of mounting tension that the Italian Fascist Party was formed, in 1919, by Benito Mussolini. Mussolini was a skilful political orator, an ex-Socialist, a journalist, the editor of a newspaper he had himself founded, and since 1921 a member of the Italian parliament. He obtained money from land-owners and industrialists and gave the party a military organization. Dressed in uniform and mobilized in 'squadre' the Fascists attacked their political opponents, often with violence, and staged local seizures of political power. They found a bold and successful squadrist leader in a young ex-service man, Italo Balbo. In 1921 the Fascist party won 35 out of the 535 seats in Parliament.

In October 1922 the Fascists organized a march on Rome, whose ostensible object was a *coup d'état* to protect the country from the threat of Socialism. In fact no seizure of power was necessary, since Mussolini was commissioned to form a government; yet this myth

INTRODUCTION

of Fascism died hard, and no good Fascist liked to be reminded that the march was made in the comfort of railway trains. (Extracts 1-3.)

Fascism itself is an emotive word. Even to Party members closest to the centre, Fascism was never an exactly defined creed. Action, and particularly violent action, was often considered an adequate substitute for policy, certainly at the start of Fascist history. Fascism started as a political movement and formulated a dogma as it went along. (Extracts 4-6.)

Mussolini was clearly a dynamic sort of person, and one who made a deep impression on all who encountered him. (Extracts 7-8.) As head of the Italian state, under the king, he found it convenient to retain for a time the forms of parliamentary government; but when real opposition looked like developing, he condoned the murder of his principal opponent, the Socialist deputy Matteotti. His personal assumption of responsibility for the murder, made publicly in Parliament in January 1925, and the immediate withdrawal of the Socialist deputies from Parliament, was a landmark in the history of Italian Fascism. Democratic parliamentary government was seen to be abandoned and a full-blooded dictatorial administration began. Some pretence of retaining a consultative Chamber was made, and this was eventually tied to the Corporative system, but as window dressing it deceived nobody. (Extracts 9-10 and 27-30.)

Italian Fascism aimed at being all-embracing—'totalitarian' in its impact. The Italian people were to be given not just government, but a philosophy and a way of life. The Party itself was to be the leaven and the requirements of party discipline were exacting; but no Italian could escape from the pressures of Fascism in his schooling, his work, his recreation, his life. (Extracts 11-22.)

Italy is a Catholic country and the head of the Catholic Church resides in Rome. No government which seeks to command the allegiance of the whole Italian people can hope to do so in opposition to the Church. Mussolini was on the whole successful both in winning and retaining the Church's support. There were, it is true, moments of strain—in 1931 over 'Catholic Action' and Fascism's relations with this organization, and again in 1938 when the Pope condemned the attacks on the Jews—but these were only moments. By and large the Church underwrote Italian Fascism, if only because she saw in that force the most reliable bulwark against the inroads of Communism. (Extracts 23-26.)

Fascism had always stressed the military virtues, and had con-

sciously imitated the Roman manner. In 1935 Mussolini decided to awaken in Italians what an English statesman once referred to as 'the sleeping genius of Imperialism'. The successful conquest of Abyssinia (Extracts 31-34), in the teeth of opposition from the League of Nations, and more particularly Great Britain, was to lead Italy to make further territorial claims. Although clamour for the cession of British and French Mediterranean possessions never received satisfaction, Italy did invade and conquer Albania in the spring of 1939.

From 1936 onwards foreign policy and war became the major preoccupations of the Fascist Government. Rebuffed by Britain and France over Abyssinia, Mussolini turned to Nazi Germany. Italian intervention in the Spanish civil war 1936-39 in support of the forces of General Franco brought Italy and Germany closer together, and the concept of a Rome-Berlin diplomatic 'axis', which was eventually to include Tokyo, took tangible shape in the so-called 'Pact of Steel' of May 1939. (Extracts 35-36.)

Nevertheless it became increasingly apparent, as German military strength and diplomatic assurance grew, that Italy was the junior partner in the alliance. Over the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 Mussolini was not consulted and he admitted his country was unready for war. Only when the war was apparently won, and it simply remained to collect the spoils, did Italy finally enter the struggle on June 11th, 1940. (Extract 37.)

Between 1940 and 1943 Italy suffered badly at British and Greek hands. On the sea and in Africa she was defeated. She received valuable and necessary help from Germany but only at the price of surrendering command of her land forces in Africa to General Rommel. When all Africa and finally Sicily were lost and the mainland of Italy threatened with invasion, the Fascist Grand Council deposed Mussolini on July 24th, 1943. A non-Fascist government was set up to replace Mussolini's, under the headship of Marshal Badoglio. Mussolini was placed under arrest and Italy surrendered herself to the Allies. (Extracts 38-44.)

In effect Fascist rule in Italy was now over, so far as the country as a whole was concerned. The areas occupied both initially and progressively by Allied armies never passed back under Fascist rule. But because Mussolini was rescued by the Germans and returned to Italy in September 1943, there came into existence a new Fascist republic, nicknamed 'The Republic of Salò' after the village on Lake Garda where it had its headquarters, which lasted until June of the following year. Since that part of Italy over which

INTRODUCTION

Mussolini now nominally ruled was in effect controlled by German armies, the Republic of Salò was never more than a puppet. How much so is seen from the fact that Mussolini had to agree to the execution of his own son-in-law (Count Ciano) as a direct result of German pressure. (Extracts 45-47.)

When in April 1945 the German armies in Italy surrendered themselves to the Allied commander, the Salò Republic came to an end; already it had become increasingly evident that owing to the actions of Italian partisans that Republic had slight chance of lengthy survival. (Extracts 48-49.) Mussolini, endeavouring to escape to Switzerland, was captured by partisans and shot. His body, exposed in a square in Milan, was reviled by an angry and jeering populace.

If the Second World War demonstrated one thing, it was that Fascism, for all its parade of virility and adulation of force and the military virtues, was corrupt and militarily incompetent. The wolf's tail had been pulled and he had shown his false teeth. Even Mussolini's greatest admirer, Adolf Hitler, was to admit in private that the alliance with Italy had been disastrous. (Extract 50.)

Mussolini considered in the end that the Italian people had been unworthy of him. After twenty-two years of Fascist rule, the Italian people reciprocated his contempt. In the beginning it had seemed as if Mussolini had something positive to offer Italy in the way of constructive authoritarian government, despite all the arrogant boasting and violence. But he had let himself be led away by the follies of grandeur and went the way of all unsuccessful tyrants.

‘He left a name at which the world grew pale
To point a moral or adorn a tale.’

1. The Rise of Fascism

1. *Address by Mussolini at a meeting on March 23rd, 1919. At this meeting, attended by 145 people, the Fasci di Combattimento were founded.*

It is fatal that majorities are static, while minorities are dynamic. We wish to be an active minority; we wish to separate the Socialist Party from the proletariat; but if the middle class believe that they will find in us their lightning-conductors, they are mistaken. Our device is economic democracy. And let us come to political democracy: I have the impression that the existing régime in Italy has thrown open the succession. There is a crisis which leaps to the eyes of all. Throughout the war we heard of the incompetence of the people who govern, and we know that if the war was won, it was solely by the virtue of the Italian people, not at all by the intelligence and the capacity of the governors. As the succession to the régime is open, we must not vacillate. We must run. If the régime is to be overthrown, it must be we who occupy its place. Therefore we create *Fasci*: organs of creation and agitation, capable of descending into the streets and crying: 'We, we alone, have the right to the succession, because we, we were the men who forced the country into the war and into victory . . .

2. *Recollections of Air Marshal Balbo written in 1932.*

When I returned from the war—just like so many others—I hated politics and the politicians, who in my opinion had betrayed the hopes of the soldiers, reducing Italy to a shameful peace, and to a systematic humiliation Italians who maintained the cult of the heroes. To struggle, to fight in order to return to the land of Giolitti, who made a merchandise of every ideal? No. Rather deny everything, destroy everything, in order to renew everything from the foundations. Many at that time, even the most generous,

tended towards communist nihilism . . . And, certainly, in my opinion, without Mussolini, three quarters of the youth of Italy returning from the trenches would have become Bolsheviks: a revolution at any cost! Mussolini deviated the course of events; he gave to fighting youth that programme of radical negation of the present which they searched after, and even more, beyond the revolutionary event, a positive mirage: government by youth, Italy of Vittorio Veneto in power, the Fascist State.

3. *Article written and published by Mussolini in Il Popolo d'Italia October 29th, 1922. On this day Mussolini agreed to the king's request to form a government.*

This is the situation. The greater part of northern Italy is in the hands of the Fascists. Central Italy—Tuscany, Umbria, the Marches, all to Lazio—is occupied by the Blackshirts. Where the police headquarters and the prefectures have not been taken by assault, the Fascists have occupied stations and post offices, which are the nerve-centres of the nation. The political authority—a little surprised and much dismayed—has not been able to cope with the movement, because a movement of this character cannot be contained and still less broken. A tremendous victory is in sight, with the almost unanimous approval of the nation. But victory is not to be mutilated by eleventh hour combinations . . . Fascism wants power and will have it.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Giolitti (referred to by Balbo) and what part had he played in the breakdown of Parliamentary government in post-war Italy?
2. Why did revolutionary socialism not succeed in forestalling Fascism in Italy at this time?
3. Why do you think that Fascism had a particular appeal for the ex-serviceman?

2. The Doctrine of Fascism

4. *From What is Fascism? by Gentile, 1925. Professor Gentile was leader of the Italian intellectuals supporting Fascism and was made Minister of Education in Mussolini's first ministry. He later fell from favour.*

Fascism is a party and a political doctrine. But above all . . . it is a total conception of life. It is impossible to be a Fascist in politics and not in the school, not in one's family or office. . . . Thus fascism embodies what may be called its own characteristic, namely taking life seriously. Life is toil, effort, sacrifice and hard work; a life in which we know perfectly well there is neither matter nor time for amusement. . . .

Fascism is a war on intellectualism. The fascist spirit is will, not intellect. . . . Fascism is and should be an enemy without truce or pity, not against intelligence, but against intellectualism, which is a disease of the intelligence. . . .

5. *From Fascism-Aristocracy by Camillo Pellizzi. Pellizzi was a university professor and writer.*

Fascism is above all and must become still more a 'mode of living' . . .

. . . Fascism has always obeyed its leaders even when it did not understand them; and its leaders have always guided its action towards the noblest and remotest heights, even when they themselves were unable to define the nature and meaning of their undertakings in an explicit and simple form. . . .

Our champions, and first and greatest the Duce, have been urged and inspired from on high . . . there is no need for dogma; discipline suffices. This is Fascism's only dogma.

. . . The 'thinker' of Fascism is and remains Benito Mussolini; for he has been thinking our fascism by making it. And this is the first and concrete mode of political thinking.

6. *The Doctrine of Fascism.* This extract is taken from an essay by Mussolini, which constitutes the official version of an article first published in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in 1932.

Thus many of the practical expressions of Fascism, such as party organization, educational systems, discipline, can only be understood when considered in relation to its general attitude towards life. Fascism does not see in the world only those superficial, material aspects in which man appears as a self-centred individual, standing alone, subject to natural laws and instincts which urge him towards a life of selfish momentary pleasure; it does not only see the individual, but also the nation and the country; and generations bound together by a moral law, moral traditions and a mission which, repressing the instinct for life enclosed in a brief circle of pleasure, builds up a higher life founded on duty, a life free from the limitations of time and space, in which the individual may achieve that purely spiritual existence in which his worth as a man consists, by self-sacrifice, in the renunciation of self-interest, by death itself. . . .

Fascism wants men to be active and to engage in activity with all their energy; it requires that they should be manfully aware of the difficulties besetting them and ready to face them. Life is conceived as a struggle in which a man is bound to win for himself a really worthy place, first of all by fitting himself physically, morally and intellectually, and to have the necessary qualities for winning it. As it is for the individual, so it is for the nation, and for all mankind. . . .

The Fascist conception of life is a religious one, in which man is viewed in his permanent relation to a higher law, endowed with an objective will transcending the individual and raising him to conscious membership of a spiritual society. . . .

Being anti-individualistic, the Fascist system of life stresses the importance of the State and recognizes the individual only in so far as his interests coincide with those of the State. . . . Fascism stands for liberty and for the only liberty worth having, the liberty of the State and of the individual within the State. The Fascist conception of the State is all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values may exist, much less have any value. Thus understood, Fascism is totalitarian. . . .

Fascism, in short, is not only a lawgiver and a founder of institutions, but an educator and a promoter of spiritual life. It does not merely aim at remoulding the forms of life, but also their con-

tent, man, his character and his faith. To achieve this purpose it enforces discipline and makes use of authority, entering into the mind and ruling with undisputed sway. Therefore it has chosen as its emblem the Lictor's rods, the symbol of unity, strength and justice. . . .

The State educates its members to citizenship, makes them aware of their mission, urges them to unity. . . . The State hands down to future generations the memory of those who laid down their lives to ensure its safety or obey its laws; it sets up as examples and records for future ages the names of captains who enlarged its territory and of the men of genius who have made it famous. Whenever respect for the State declines and the disintegrating and centrifugal tendencies of individuals and groups prevail, nations are heading for decay. . . .

If Liberalism spells individualism, Fascism spells collectivism. The Fascist State, however, is a unique and original creation. It is not reactionary but revolutionary. . . .

Today I hold that Fascism is an idea, a doctrine, a realization, is universal; it is Italian in its particular institutions, but it is universal by reason of its nature. Therefore anyone may foresee a Fascist Europe drawing inspiration for her institutions from the doctrine and practice of Fascism; Europe, in other words, giving a Fascist turn to the solution of problems which beset the modern State, the Twentieth Century State which is very different from the States existing before 1789, and the States formed immediately after. Today Fascism answers to universal requirements.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there in the doctrine of Fascism as expounded here to appeal to Youth?
2. What appeal might Fascist teaching have for the Catholic Church?
3. State briefly, in your own words, what you think Mussolini means by 'Liberty'. How does this differ from the democratic idea of Liberty?

3. Benito Mussolini

7. *Description of a meeting with Mussolini by Hugh Dalton in his Memoirs (vol. 2 The Fateful Years). Dalton was an ex-Minister of the British Labour Government which had fallen in 1931. The interview described below took place in December 1932.*

I saw him at the Palazzo Venezia. After a short wait in a small anteroom, a great door was flung open. It shut behind me as I entered, and I was in the famous room, with the wide windows looking out on the Piazza Venezia. From these windows the Duce had delivered many of his most notable orations. It was an immense room with marble walls. There was no furniture except, at the far end, a writing table with two chairs. The Duce was standing by the table, his profile towards me, with upturned eyes, reading a book. We two were alone. He gave no sign as I advanced towards him, my footsteps echoing on the parquet floor.

When I was about half-way across, he suddenly turned and came forward to meet me. I had prepared my opening gambit.

I.—‘I am very proud to meet the Head of the Italian State, of whom all the world is talking.’

He.—‘Ah! you speak the language. Where did you learn it?’

I.—‘I learned it at the front (*nella zona di guerra*). I am a soldier of the Unconquered Army.*

This gave us a good start. He displayed charm and intelligence. He was shorter than I had expected, but strongly built. Small brown eyes which turned up so that the whites showed, like a clown in a circus. A naturally soft musical voice, though he had spoilt it by too much shouting at open air meetings. He was from the Romagna, whence many of the finest opera singers come.

* ‘The Unconquered Army’ was the name given by the Italians to their Third Army, which had withdrawn in good order when the Second Army had been routed by the Germans at Caporetto in 1917. Dalton had served with a British siege battery supporting the Italian Army.

I referred to Henderson's* visit, and said that he returned much impressed by contact with the Duce. He did not rise at all at this.

So I turned to praise the . . . energy which I found in Italy. I spoke, in particular, of the Public Works, the afforestation, the draining of the Pontine Marshes, which I had just seen, and the building of new villages there. I was wondering, I said, whether in England, though our traditions and political institutions were so different, we could catch something of this spirit of adventure. He was very pleased at this and asked, almost caressingly, 'Yes, why don't you?' 'Perhaps,' I replied, 'because we have too many old men in high places.' 'Ah,' he said, '*bisogna svecchiare l'Inghilterra, come gli altri paesi.*' [It is necessary to rejuvenate England, like other countries.] 'But was not Pitt Prime Minister at twenty-two? Could that not happen again?' 'Not easily,' I replied.

I then asked him about the progress of the Corporative State. As yet, he said, there was only one Corporation. That was for the theatre. But soon, he hoped, there would be Corporations for Bread and Silk, and, perhaps, for Iron and Steel. 'We are not in a hurry,' he said, 'we are advancing with great prudence' [*Procediamo molto prudentemente*]. We are empiricists. We have no dogmas. We seek only the maximum well-being of the people. That is our only principle. We adjust our policy to realities and choose our means accordingly. Individualistic capitalism has completely broken down. We reject that. State capitalism, as in Russia, where even writing-paper'—he picked up a sheet from his desk—'is sold by the State, we also reject.'

'But all Fascists are equal. Work for the State is a duty. The State claims the right to interfere in every branch of economic life. It has just been decided that no new undertaking may be started in Italy without the permission of the State, and a new law for the expropriation of private property is being prepared. In the schools the children of the poor and of the rich sit side by side, and eat the same lunch, even though the children of the rich may arrive in motor-cars.'

He was in favour of a reduction in armaments. This had to be imposed upon the fighting services. 'I told the Ministry of Marine, when Henderson came to see me, *Riduzioni o Demissioni!*' ['Reductions or resignations!']

* Arthur Henderson, who had been Foreign Secretary in the Labour Government 1929-31 and had visited Mussolini in Rome in 1930 in an unsuccessful attempt to get a Franco-Italian agreement on a limitation of naval armaments. Mussolini had been co-operative but there had been subsequent disagreement on the interpretation of the formula agreed to.

'What a pity,' I remarked, 'that this can't be said to all that international crowd of Ministers at Geneva, at the Disarmament Conference that drags on and on.' 'If it drags on much longer,' he said, 'without result, it will lead to war, not peace. The Dove of Peace will die from lack of nourishment. Grandi,* (and he praised him and I agreed), had put forward practical proposals for disarmament and the abolition of these costly offensive weapons. But the French stood in the way. They made a very bad impression, refusing either to disarm or to pay their debt to America, though they had so much gold.'

At the end of our talk he walked with me to the door. 'Be sure,' he said, 'next time you are in Rome, to come and see me again.' But I never saw Rome again in his lifetime.

8. *Mussolini as described by Franz von Papen in his Memoirs. Von Papen was at this time, 1933, Vice Chancellor of the German Reich, Hitler being Chancellor.*

I found the Italian dictator of very different calibre to Hitler. Short in stature but with an air of great authority, his massive head conveyed an impression of great strength of character. He handled people like a man who was accustomed to having his orders obeyed, and displayed immense charm and did not give the impression of a revolutionary. Hitler always had a slight air of uncertainty, whereas Mussolini was calm, dignified and appeared the complete master of whatever subject was being discussed. I felt he would be a good influence on Hitler, he was much more of a statesman and reminded one of a diplomat of the old school rather than a dictator.

QUESTIONS:

1. What characteristics of Mussolini are revealed in these descriptions?
2. What appears to be Mussolini's attitude towards (a) Britain, (b) Armaments in 1932? When and why did his attitude change?
3. What qualities does Mussolini appear to have possessed which impressed those who met him?

* Count Grandi, later Italian Ambassador in London, was the Italian representative at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva.

4. Fascism and Violence

9. *The Murder of Giacomo Matteotti from The Times August 19th, 1924. Signor Matteotti was a Socialist Deputy who was a powerful opponent of Mussolini and the Fascist party and had consistently opposed them from 1921 to 1924. He was not forgiven for a damaging speech he had made in the Chamber attacking the conduct of recent elections.*

After a search lasting for over eight weeks, the body of Signor Matteotti the Socialist deputy, who was kidnapped and murdered on June 10th, was found yesterday, buried near the Via Flaminia. . . .

The police had for the last two days been concentrating their energies in the neighbourhood where the late Deputy's blood-stained coat had been found on Wednesday. But in spite of the ransacking of the headquarters of the Early Christians at Riano and other exhausting efforts, no further clue came to light until yesterday morning.

The credit of the actual discovery is due to a brigadier of the Carabinieri on leave who, accompanied by his police dog, was helping in the search. The dog had begun scratching on the edge of a thicket lying some fifty yards from the road, and his master found the remains of a human body, in an advanced stage of decomposition, had already been partially revealed.

The body was found naked and contorted, with a pointed file stuck in the breast. It had been under a few inches of earth, and much of it had been devoured by foxes. The condition of the skull, however, was such as to render recognition possible, and upon the arrival of the judicial authorities from Rome, accompanied by some Socialist deputies, friends of the victim, all doubts that the body was that of Signor Matteotti were dispelled.

10. *From The Times, January 5th, 1925.*

FASCIST VIOLENCE
MUSSOLINI ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY
SPEECH IN CHAMBER

Yesterday's meeting of the Parliament did not do as much to clear up the situation as had been hoped. No vote was taken before the Chamber was indefinitely adjourned. The atmosphere of the House, when it assembled, was far too electric to permit of the transaction of any ordinary business. The deputies burst out into uncontrolled cheering and the singing of the Fascist song *Giovinezza*, upon Signor Mussolini's entry, and again upon his rising to make his speech upon the internal situation. . . .

Signor Mussolini began by announcing that his speech would not be a strictly Parliamentary utterance. . . .

'It is I,' he continued, 'who accuse myself before this assembly.' He had been accused, he said, of forming a *Cheka* [the name of the Soviet secret police], but the violent actions of the so-called *Cheka* had invariably been tempestuous and stupid, whereas he himself had always advocated 'surgical, intelligent and chivalrous violence'. Therefore it could not have been he who founded it. How could people take him for such a fool as to have ordered the assaults on his opponents, and considering the idyllic atmosphere of the Chamber at the time, to have organized an attack upon a man (Signor Matteotti) whom, as an opponent, he respected for possessing stubbornness resembling his own.

Signor Mussolini then . . . severely censured the attitude of the opposition press in regard to the Matteotti crime and the offer of peace advanced by Fascismo . . . 'I declare before this assembly and before the Italian people that I alone assume the moral, political and historical responsibility of all that has taken place.' This dramatic announcement was greeted with tremendous cheering. . . . The solution of the present problem lay, he said, in force, and Fascismo was in a position to carry this out, a fact which would soon be realized were he to employ in freeing this force but the hundredth part of the energies he had employed in controlling it.

Conclusion of Mussolini's Speech on January 3rd, 1925 (not reported verbatim in The Times report quoted above).

If misquoted words are enough to hang a man, then out with the noose and gallows! If Fascism has been castor oil and club and not a proud passion of the best Italian youth, the blame is on me. If Fascism has been a criminal plot, if violence has resulted from a certain historic, political, and moral atmosphere, the responsibility

is mine, because I have deliberately created this atmosphere. . . . Italy wants peace and quiet, work and calm. I will give these things with love if possible and with force if necessary.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why has the murder of Matteotti been seen as a turning point in the career of Fascism as the government of Italy and in the career of Mussolini?
2. Find out more about the opponents of Fascism in Italy and the methods used by the Fascists for dealing with opposition.
3. What does this last extract tell you about Mussolini as a speaker and politician?

5. The Fascist Party and the State and its Citizens

11. *Preamble to the Constitution of the Party, 1926.*

Fascism is a Militia at the service of the Nation. Its objective: to realize the greatness of the Italian people.

From its origins, which are mingled with the renaissance of the Italian conscience and the will to Victory, until the present, Fascism has always considered itself in a state of war: first to overthrow those who suffocated the will of the nation, and today and always, to defend and develop the power of the Italian people.

Fascism is not only a grouping of Italians round a determinate programme realized or to be realized, but it is above all a faith which has had its confessors and in whose orders, the new Italians work as militants, expressed in their efforts in the victorious war and in the subsequent struggle between nation and anti-nation.

The party is the essential organ of these orders, and the function of the party is fundamentally indispensable to the vitality of the régime.

Only carefully selected members of the Party might join the Militia, which accepted volunteer recruits at twenty years of age and numbered 200,000. Its purpose was to support the Fascist régime; units of the militia were not mobilized for war.

12. *The Ten Commandments of the Fascist Fighter as promulgated in September 1931 by the Party Secretary.*

THE FASCIST PARTY AND THE STATE AND ITS CITIZENS

1. God and Fatherland: all other affections and duties come after these.
2. Whoever is not ready to give himself body and soul for his country, and to serve the Duce without discussion, is not worthy of wearing the Black Shirt. Fascism repudiates lukewarm faith and half-characters.
3. Use your intelligence to understand the orders that you receive and all your enthusiasm for obedience.
4. Discipline is not only a virtue of the soldiers in the ranks, it must also be the practice of every day and all circumstances.
5. A bad child and a negligent student are not Fascists.
6. Organize your time in such a way that work will be a joy, and your games work.
7. Learn to suffer without complaining, to give without asking, to serve without waiting for a reward.
8. Good actions, like actions in a war, must not be done by halves: carry them to their extreme consequences.
9. In actual circumstances, remember that the good lies in audacity.
10. And thank God every day for having made you Fascist and Italian.

13. *By 1935 these had been replaced by a Revised Ten Commandments.*

1. Know that the Fascist, and in particular the soldier, must not believe in perpetual peace.
2. Days of imprisonment are always deserved.
3. The nation is also served, even as a sentinel over a can of petrol.
4. A companion must be a brother, first, because he lives with you, and secondly because he thinks like you.
5. The rifle and cartridge belt, and the rest, are confided to you, not to be ruined in leisure, but to be preserved for war.
6. Do not ever say: 'The Government will pay' . . . because it is you who pay; and the Government is that which you willed to have, and for which you put on a uniform.
7. Discipline is the soul of armies; without it, there are no soldiers, but only confusion and defeat.
8. Mussolini is always right.
9. For a volunteer there are no extenuating circumstances when he is disobedient.
10. One thing must be dear to you above all, the life of the Duce.

14. *Mussolini's Recommendations to Fascist Office Holders, 1933.*

1. Not to frequent in the daytime, and still less at night, resorts in the fashionable parts of the city, restaurants, theatres, etc.
2. To go about as much as possible on foot, and when it is unavoidable to take an ordinary motor-car; and better still, to go by motor-cycle.
3. In official ceremonies no top hats, but only the simple Black Shirt of the Revolution.
4. Not to change your usual habits and system of living in any way.
5. Keep your office hours rigorously, and listen to the maximum number of persons, with the greatest patience and humanity.
6. Mix with young workmen, and go, not merely morally, but physically, among the people, especially in these times of difficulty.

15. *The Roman Salute (from a circular to the Party from the Party Secretary).*

The Roman salute is now in common usage, because all the Italian people have adopted it.

Handshaking, especially in official ceremonies, must be absolutely abolished. It is to be abolished also in the introductions which are made on the arrival of a leader, as well as at the end of a speech, including those made in the Chamber of Deputies.

Apart from every other consideration of a Fascist character, it is unaesthetic, causes a loss of time, and it causes embarrassment, owing to the inevitable conclusions which result from it.

16. *The Fascist Hymn Giovinezza (Youth). This song was sung at all Fascist ceremonies and often replaced the official national anthem.*

Hail, O people of Heroes,
Hail, O immortal Fatherland,
Thy children are reborn
With faith in the ideal.

The valour of thy warriors,
The virtue of thy pathfinders
The vision of Alighieri
Shines now in every heart.

Within the Italian boundary,
Italians have been refashioned,
Refashioned by Mussolini,
For the war tomorrow,
For the joy of labour,
For the peace and the laurel,
For the shaming of all those
Who their country deny.

The poets and the craftsmen,
The gentry and the peasants,
With the pride of Italians,
Swear loyalty to Mussolini.
There is no poor district
Which does not send its tale,
Which does not unfurl its banners
Of Fascism the redeemer.

Chorus:

Youth! Youth!
Springtime of loveliness,
In the bitterness of life,
Your song rings out, and away!

17. *Fascist Youth Organizations. From Order of the Day January 20th, 1930, by the Secretary of the Party.*

The régime is and intends to remain a régime of the young, even from the point of view of actual age, wherever it is possible. To give an example: other things being equal, when we have to choose between thirty years of age and forty, we prefer the thirties. The squads were composed of young men, sometimes of adolescents, who knew how to fight, and died intrepidly under the sign of the Littorio.

The régime intends to prepare spiritually all the youth of Italy, from whom by successive selections, there must issue the ranks of the governing classes of Italy tomorrow, and for this purpose it has created, by the side of the civil Militia of the Party, the organization of the Balilla, the *Avanguardisti* and the University groups. The totalitarian principle of the education of youth—systematically demanded by Fascism—responds to this supreme necessity of the Fascist Revolution which intends to last. . . .

By the side of this preparation of a general order, the young people, and even younger people than they, that is to say those who could not participate in the war or the Revolution, must be resolutely introduced from the beginner stage into the ranks of political, administrative, Trade Union, journalistic, co-operative, academic, military, sporting and *dopolavoro** life, without jealous stupidity and timorous misconceptions. . . .

The young—more than anybody else—must know how to obey, to acquire the right, or rather, the duty of commanding; more than the rest, they must know how to dare; more than others they must despise an ideal of life, whether individual or collective, of indifference, or what is worse, of comfort.

These conditions posed, the young of today and of tomorrow will be the continuers in spirit and form of the Revolution of October 1922.

18. *Extract from an Italian Primary School Text-Book, Class 2.*

‘Teacher’, said Bruno to the mistress as she entered the class, ‘yesterday Daddy bought a new flag, very large, with a lance at the top which looked like gold. Tomorrow we are going to put it on the balcony so that everybody in the street will be able to see it!’

‘I’m sure you will! But tomorrow all the balconies and all the windows will have flags. And do you know why?’

‘Yes, teacher!’ cried the children, jumping to their feet.

‘Good all of you! But let only Bruno Sereni speak: What is tomorrow?’

‘THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF OCTOBER.’

‘And what is the twenty-eighth of October?’

‘It is the anniversary of the March on Rome. The Fascists in their Black Shirts enter Rome and put everything in order. Then the Duce arrives and says, “Go away all nasty Italians who do not know how to do things for the good. Now I will see to putting everything right! Long live Italy!” ’

‘Good,’ said the mistress. ‘You say it in your own way, but you explain yourself—all the same.’

‘I know it too!’ answered several children.

‘Certainly! All of you know already what Fascism is and what Benito Mussolini has done for Italy. On October 28th, 1922, there began his great work of renewal, which is still not finished, but

* *Dopolavoro* was the State organization for recreation, culture and sport.

which has already changed the face of Italy. The first day we recall with gratitude, and therefore every year we want to solemnize it with great rejoicing. Listen, children: even if you have to make it with paper, tomorrow every window must have its flag.'

'Yes, teacher! Eia! Eia! Alala'.

QUESTIONS:

1. Summarize what you gather were the aims and ideals of the Fascist Party.
2. The Fascist Party consciously appealed to youth. Why do you think this appeal would not appeal to the Italian youth of today?
3. The cult of Mussolini is a good example of 'the cult of Personality'. What qualities did he attempt to portray as the ideal Leader?
4. Explain the ways in which Mussolini was able to project to the people of Italy an idealized personality.
5. In what ways do you think that intelligent men found living in Italy, under Fascist rule, a suffocating experience?

6. Fascist Social and Economic Policy

19. *Extract from a speech by Mussolini on the Inauguration of the Corporations, November 14th, 1934. The world economic crisis which began in 1929 compelled the Fascist Government to translate the policy of State concern in industry and labour relations, forecast in the so-called Labour Charter of April 21, 1927, into practice. This aimed at bringing employers and employed into Trades Unions or corporations controlled by the State. In 1934 Mussolini created twenty-two corporations which comprehended the national economy in all its different branches. The whole was controlled by a National Council of Corporations.*

Is this crisis which has gripped us for the last four years *in* the system or *of* the system? A grave question. . . . Today I reply: the crisis has penetrated so profoundly into the system that it has become a crisis *of* the system [loud applause]. It is no longer a wound but a constitutional disease. Today, we can affirm that the method of capitalistic production is superseded and with it the theory of economic liberalism which illustrated and provided the

apology for it. . . . The capitalistic ideal is that of standardizing mankind from its cradle to its coffin. . . . When does capitalistic enterprise cease to be an economic fact? When its size leads it to become a social one. And this is just the moment when capitalistic enterprise, having fallen into difficulties, throws itself desperately into the State's arms. This is the instant when the State's intervention becomes more and more necessary. . . . There is now no economic field in which the State is not obliged to intervene. . . . The Corporation is established to develop the wealth, political power and welfare of the Italian people. These three elements are conditioned by one another. Political strength creates wealth, while wealth, in its turn, invigorates political action. I wish to call your attention to what I mentioned as our scope, namely the welfare of the people. It is necessary that at a certain moment these institutions which we have created shall be felt and noticed directly by the masses as instruments through which they improve their standard of life. . . . The labourer, the peasant, should be able at a certain moment to tell himself and his dear ones: 'If I am today effectively better off, I owe it to the institutions which the Fascist Revolution has created' . . . Today we are burying economic liberalism, the Corporation plays that part in the economic field, which the Grand Council and the Militia do in the political. Corporativism means a disciplined, and therefore a controlled, economy, since there can be no discipline which is not controlled. Corporativism overcomes Socialism as well as it does Liberalism: it creates a new synthesis.

20. *Extract of Report in The Times, May 25th, 1934, on the Inauguration of the Corporation.*

The corporations contemplated in the Italian Labour charter and in the law of April 3rd, 1926, instituted by the law of February 5th, 1934, and approved in their general plan at the sitting of the Central committee on May 10th, last, are now on the eve of coming into force. . . .

When the latest sitting of the National Council of Corporations took place in September, it was uncertain whether the corporations were to be of the 'category' or of the 'productive cycle' type. In the plan approved on May 10th, the productive cycle corporations were adopted. Thus, there will not be, for example, a corporation of furniture makers, but a timber corporation, including the whole

cycle through which the tree of the forest is transformed into a piece of furniture or worked wood or materials for other industries [building, shipbuilding, etc.]. In other words, the corporations will be bodies in which all those who are engaged in a given cycle of production will be represented. In every corporation employers and workers are represented in equal numbers, together with experts having the function of advisers, and three representatives of the Fascist Party who are expected to see that the decisions taken are in the general interest of the State. The corporation will be presided over by the Minister of Corporations [Signor Mussolini] or by vice-presidents chosen from among the Fascist numbers of each corporation. The representatives of the employers and workers will be appointed by their respective federations and syndicates, but their appointment must be approved by the head of the government. . . .

21. The Duce and the Family. *From The Times, December 1934. Mussolini embarked on a 'Battle for Population' in order to achieve a population for Italy of 60 millions by 1950. He considered that with a population of only 40 millions, Italy was still a second-rate power.*

Again this year Christmas Eve in Italy was the feast of the mothers who have given to the Fatherland the largest number of children. . . . Signor Mussolini personally distributed in Rome 93 prizes to 93 mothers, one from each of the 93 provinces, chosen from the women who have had the greatest number of children. In Milan and other great provincial centres there were similar ceremonies; prizes in money and in goods were presented to the poor mothers and diplomas to the rich ones. The Governor of Rome awarded six prizes—in each case a small house or a four-room flat—to the leading six couples with the biggest families. And it is not only at Christmas time but all the year round that Fascism cares for the mother and the child.

The demographic problem is the one which Signor Mussolini has most at heart. Since 1861 the percentage of males not exceeding fifteen years old has fallen in Italy from 34·7 to 30·93. 'Therefore', Signor Mussolini infers, 'in 1861 out of 100 males there were 34 future soldiers: today there are only 31. One million males in 1861 offered to the Fatherland 340,000 future soldiers: today it offers only 310,000. There is a decrease of 30,000 units. The might of the Fatherland is cheated of a very notable contingent of energies

owing to the progressive shrinkage of the birthrate. Thirty thousand units per million men mean 600,000 units in 20,000,000 men.'

The decline of births in Italy leads us therefore to this conclusion: in case of mobilization a gap of 600,000 soldiers. Will the Revolution of the Black Shirts be able to fill this terrible gap?

The Revolution of the Black Shirts is doing its best. You must get married and have children, a lot of children. There are inducements—the citizen who has at least six children is exempted from all taxation—and there are four penalties for those who refuse to be encouraged. The bachelor is hit by a special tax, light from the age of twenty-five to thirty-five, higher from the age of thirty-five to fifty, and then lighter again from fifty onwards. This is not all. He is handicapped in his career. A married man is always preferred to a bachelor. Also in the cities, where the birthrate is falling, there are penalties. The Duce denounces those cities in the *Popolo d'Italia*, in short articles which do not need to be signed, in order that it may be understood that they come from his pen. Poor Turin has had a nasty scolding because it seems devoted to the bourgeois rule of 'one child'.

Nowadays when a man takes his bride to the altar he receives from the priest a charming booklet containing the great precepts of the religious and civil law on marriage and the *Encyclical Casti Connubii*. The bridegroom also receives the so-called 'nuptial policy' issued by the National Insurance Institute, by which, when he becomes a father of six children, he will be entitled to the immediate payment of half of the insured capital, while he will not pay any premiums on the other half.

Once married he is entitled to the *neuf joies de mariage* of Rabelais, the first of which and the most genuine—Heaven knows what may happen to the remaining eight—is the honeymoon journey. To Rome, of course. Newly married couples who wish to visit Rome enjoy a reduction of 70 per cent in the railway fare. This concession was made in July 1932, and 62,844 couples had taken advantage of it up to last November; and 2,324 of them came from abroad. . . .

22. *Article in The Times on October 29th, 1928. Celebrations of the Sixth Anniversary of the March on Rome. The Fascist Government, like many other dictatorships, sought to perpetuate its memory in great schemes of public works, which would not only impress the*

populace (and of course the outside world), but in the process of their construction help to solve current economic and social problems.

A special number of the party 'Order Sheet' was issued this morning with a message to the Blackshirts. In this message, which strikes the keynote to the celebrations and is being read out publicly throughout Italy, Signor Mussolini says that '2,082 public works will be formally opened in order to celebrate with deeds, and in silence, the great undertaking which, in October 1922, freed the Italian Republic and created a régime new in Italy and in the world. There are 566 road works, 337 scholastic buildings, 399 hydraulic works, 65 works of land reclamation, 63 maritime works, 79 works of health, 371 public buildings and 860 various works of minor importance.'

These dry figures, which presumably refer to activities extending over several years and only now brought to completion, will, says the Duce, silence hostile criticism at home and abroad. . . .

Special interest attaches to the new motor road also opened today connecting Rome and Ostia and called 'The Road to the Sea', which has been made as far as possible in a straight line, and will, when the full scheme has been completed, be supplemented by two tracks for the use of slower vehicles. The road will be illuminated by special lamps which will eliminate dazzling headlights. A medal has been struck by the Governor of Rome in commemoration of the event. . . .

QUESTIONS:

1. What seem to you the strengths and weaknesses of the Corporative idea?
2. What steps did the Fascist government take to solve the agrarian problems of Italy?
3. Summarize the positive achievements of the Fascist regime in regard to its social and economic policies.
4. Why do you think that the corporative system would be unattractive to management and workers in a democratic industrial state?
5. The idea of a 'battle' to increase the national birthrate strikes us today as ridiculous and even wrong. Try to analyse your objections to such an idea.
6. Mussolini instituted a 'Battle for Grain'. Find out about this and explain why it was an unsound scheme.

7. Church and State

23. *Official Summary of the Lateran Treaty, Concordat and Financial Convention. (Transmitted by Reuter). This treaty between the Papacy and the Italian State brought to an end a quarrel which had lasted since Italian troops invaded Rome in 1870 and the Pope had declared himself 'a prisoner in the Vatican'.*

Rome, February 11th, 1929

... The political treaty between the Holy See and Italy is composed of a preamble and twenty-seven articles ... the preamble begins by reaffirming the principle contained in the first article of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Italy, by which the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion is the only State religion in Italy.

The text of the treaty proceeds to recognize the full property, exclusive dominion, and sovereign jurisdiction of the Holy See over the Vatican as at present constituted. For this purpose the 'City of the Vatican' is created. In this territory no interference by the Italian Government will be possible and there will be no authority other than the authority of the Holy See.

St. Peter's Square, although forming part of the Vatican territory, will continue normally to be open to the public and subject to the police powers of the Italian authorities.

... A special clause specifies all the public services with which the Vatican City will be endowed by the Italian Government, including the railway station and direct connection with other states by telegraph, telephone, wireless, broadcasting and postal services. ...

Italy recognizes the right of the Holy See to send its own diplomats to foreign countries. ...

It declares the Roman question definitely and irrevocably settled and therefore eliminated and recognizes the Kingdom of Italy under the dynasty of the House of Savoy, with Rome as the capital of the Italian State. Italy on its side recognizes the state of the Vatican City under the sovereignty of the Supreme Pontiff.

... The article concerning marriage says: 'The Italian State ... recognizes marriage as a sacrament regulated by canon law in its relation to the civil law. Banns of marriage must appear in the parish church as well as in the town hall. ...' ... Religious instruction will be compulsory not only in the elementary schools, but also in the secondary schools. ...

Italy recognizes the Catholic organizations forming part of 'the Italian Catholic Action' which, according to the instructions of the Holy See, must keep their activities outside any political party and under the immediate control of the hierarchy of the Church for the purpose of spreading and applying Catholic principles. ...

24. *Extract from the Encyclical letter Non abbiamo bisogno of Pope Pius XI signed on June 29th 1931. This Papal pronouncement was prompted by Fascist attacks on the organization 'Catholic Action' for interference in the sphere of education.*

But there have been other attacks on truth and justice on a larger scale. The inventions, falsehoods and real calumnies diffused by the hostile press of the party, which is the only press which is free to say anything and is often ordered or almost ordered what it must say, were largely summarized in a message which was cautiously characterized as unofficial and yet was broadcast to the general public by the most powerful means of diffusion which exist at present.

... The message says: 'The assertion that Catholic Action has not had a true political character is absolutely false.' On the discourtesy of these words we will not enlarge; and if the case were not so lamentable, we should treat as ridiculous the untruthfulness and flippancy of what follows. Catholic Action, says the message, is a political party because it has banners, badges, identification cards and all the other external forms of a political party. But banners, badges, identification cards and other similar external appurtenances are today the most common things in every country of the world for the most varied kind of associations and activities which have nothing, and wish to have nothing, in common with politics. ...

The message asserts that Catholic Action was organized in a political way and that it had nothing to do with 'religious education and propaganda of faith'. ... The fact that an organization exists does not mean, from that very fact, that the end and purpose of the organization is political.

'However,' continues the message, 'the strongest argument that can be used as justification for the destruction of the Catholic circles of Youth is the defence of the State, which is no more than the simple duty of every government' . . . The receivers and readers of the message would have smiled with incredulity or wondered greatly if the message had added what is also true: that of the Catholic circles of Youth which were objects of police-measure, 10,000 were, or rather actually are, composed of girls and young women, with a total membership of about 500,000. Who can find a serious danger and a real threat to the security of the State in this? And it must be added that only 220,000 are inscribed as 'effective members', more than 100,000 are little 'aspirants', and more than 150,000 still smaller children, called 'Benjamins'.

There still remain the circles of the Catholic young men, that same Catholic Youth which, in the publications of the youth of the party and in the circular letters of the so-called leaders of the party, are represented and held up to ridicule and scorn . . . as a swarm of 'rabbits', only fit to carry candles and recite rosaries in sacred processions. This perhaps explains why they have been in these recent days so many times, and with such ignobility on the part of their assailants, attacked and maltreated even to the shedding of blood and left undefended by those who could and should protect them. If it were not for the harmlessness and peaceableness for which they have been sneered at, would their persecutors (sometimes armed) have dared to fall upon them? . . .

A conception of the State which makes the rising generations belong to it entirely, without any exception, from the tenderest years up to adult life, cannot be reconciled by a Catholic either with Catholic doctrine or with the natural rights of the family. It is not possible for a Catholic to accept the claim that the Church and the Pope must limit themselves to the external practices of religion (such as Mass and the Sacraments) and that all the rest of education belongs to the State. . . .

25. *Extract from Fascism, Doctrine and Institutions 1934 by Mussolini.*

The Fascist State is not indifferent to religious phenomena in general, nor does it maintain an attitude of indifference to Roman Catholicism, the special positive religion of the Italians. The State has no theology, but it has a moral code. The Fascist State sees in religion one of the deepest of spiritual manifestations, and for this

reason it not only respects religion, but defends and protects it. The Fascist State does not attempt, as did Robespierre at the height of the revolutionary delirium of the Convention, to set up a 'god' of its own; nor does it vainly seek, as did Bolshevism, to efface God from the soul of man. Fascism respects the God of ascetics, saints and heroes, and it also respects God as conceived by the ingenuous and primitive heart of the people, the God to whom their prayers are raised.

26. *From a leading article in The Times, August 24th, 1938. The Church and Jewish Persecution. In deference to German wishes the Fascist press in July 1938 embarked on an anti-Jewish campaign, that was to be followed three months later by a programme of anti-Jewish legislation.*

A census of the Jews is being taken in Italy; questionnaires have been distributed to families known to possess Jewish blood. According to an official statement published a fortnight ago, the object of the census is to ensure that the Jews' share in the life of the State shall be restricted in proper relation to their numbers, and the proper ratio was then said to be one Jew to 1,000 Italians. Since a group of Italian professors came into prominent print with an analysis of racialism of anti-Semitic character about six weeks ago, the Italian campaign against the Jews has been developing with extraordinary rapidity. The press has been full of articles, and propaganda has been distributed. The representative of the Jewish press agency was asked to leave Rome; foreign Jews have been excluded from Italian schools; a Jewish *podestà* and a Jewish newspaper have been firmly shelved; and Signor Mussolini has uttered the significant words, 'We shall go straight ahead'.

Perhaps the most important consequence of the new racialism so far has been to provoke a speech from the Pope in which he said that the Church recognized only a single universal race and that he failed to understand why Italy had found it necessary 'to go and copy the Germans'. Signor Mussolini at once retorted that to speak of Fascist imitation was 'absurd', and from these speeches has arisen a fresh dispute between the Italian Government and the Vatican. On Sunday His Holiness took the unprecedented action of walking from his villa to the headquarters of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide and warning his audience against the dangers of 'exaggerated nationalism', and between his resolution and Fascist intransigence the new lists are set.

QUESTIONS:

1. How had relations between Church and State been regulated, between 1870 and 1929, in Italy?
2. Compare the attitude of Mussolini towards the Catholic Church with that of Napoleon I.
3. Apart from the quarrels over Catholic Action in 1931-32, and over the Jewish question (while Pius XI remained Pope), relations between Church and State in Italy were good under Fascism. Why did the Church support the Fascist régime?

8. Parliament, Institutions and Government

27. *Parliamentary Address by Signor Rocco, minister of Justice. By a law of December 24th, 1925, the Chief of the Government was made appointable by the King and dismissable by him. He recommended the ministers to form the King's council, and had the right to take over as many ministries himself as he saw fit. He had no responsibility to Parliament, but only to the King.*

At the head of the Government there must be a single person, not the Council of Ministers, which of course remains a consulting organ of the highest importance, but which from its collegiate nature cannot be the effective director of the political life of the country . . . The old idea of [Cabinet] solidarity is abandoned, because it assumes diversity in action, and therefore has no longer any reason to exist when there is only one policy, that is to say when action is unified. . . .

Parliamentary government arose when the suffrage was restricted and the forces of the State were practically in the hands of some minorities of the intellectual bourgeoisie. . . . Things changed when the masses entered into political life for the guardianship of their political interests. The Lower Chamber, elected by universal suffrage, became simply a numerical representation of the electors,

and could no longer be the exact expression of the political forces existing in the country, nor could it be an accurate reflection of the true state of the nation. There are, in fact, other living and active forces not represented, or represented inadequately in Parliament. . . . The estimate and interpretation of all real voices in the country is a very complex task, and is so far from being indicated by an enumeration of votes, that it can only be made by one who is above all conflicting forces. . . . The Government being freed from its dependence on Parliament, a return has been made to the principle of the constitution that government emanates from the royal power and not from Parliament, and ministers must enjoy the confidence of the king, the faithful interpreter of the needs of the nation. In a period when the life of a great people has become highly complex, it is no longer possible to give to the elected representatives the chief power in the government of the country. . . .

28. *The Election of March 1929. Extract from Modern Italy as Seen by an Englishwoman by Cicely Hamilton, published in 1932.*

In May 1928 it was enacted that a single list of candidates should be submitted to the electorate. These candidates were chosen by the Fascist Grand Council from lists submitted to it by the trade unions and other associations of professional workers and employers.

The last election took place in March 1929—otherwise Year VII of the Fascist Revolution—and the Italian citizen, possessed of a vote, was required to register a straightforward approval or disapproval of the list of national candidates put forward; which meant that he registered approval or disapproval of the works and ways of the Government. Do you agree with our Fascist policy? That, roughly speaking, was the question asked of the elector. And the manner in which the elector answered it is inscribed in proud letters on one of the municipal buildings of Florence—and, for aught I know, on municipal buildings all over the Italian peninsula. It is indeed a noteworthy answer, which no Government, whatever the success of its record, could hope to obtain from a British electorate. Between eight and nine million Italian citizens—nearly ninety per cent of the electorate—recorded their votes at the poll; and of these 8,517,838 answered the question with a satisfied ‘Si’; and a meagre company of 135,773 cast in their disapproving ‘No!’ . . . One hundred and thirty-five thousand seven hundred and seventy-three—out of an electorate numbering between nine

and ten million. . . . I stared at the figures, stood and stared at them for minutes. Even remembering that this was the election affected by the Lateran Treaty, signed in the preceding month; and that, as one of the results of the Lateran Treaty, good Catholics, instead of abstaining, as aforetime, were urged by their priests to the poll!—even so, the figures were sufficiently astounding. . . . Truly if elections can be taken at their face value, Fascism appears to be attaining its goal of the unitary political conscience—people who think all alike!

29. *A New Electoral Chamber. From an article in The Times, March 28th, 1939.*

The opening last week of the new Chamber of Fascios and Corporations represents a fresh and decisive step in the formation of Signor Mussolini's conception of the corporative state, which he has been slowly realizing during the past fifteen years. Its central idea is that the thought and energy which goes to the shaping of the country's laws should be organized not (as hitherto in most countries) on a territorial basis, but on the basis of its economic activities, and that the unit of representation should not be the city or the district, but the trade or professional calling. . . .

The new Chamber has 682 members, who are called National Counsellors. Of these more than two-thirds are delegates of the corporations, in most cases leading officials of the syndicates. The remainder, representing the Fascios, are officials of the Party. . . .

The function of the new Chamber is purely consultative. The old Chamber had in theory legislative powers. In practice the laws were made by the Government and submitted to it in the form of decrees, in which it gave its unqualified consent. Only the fiction of debate was kept up. . . .

Essentially the passing of laws was a mechanical process. This pretence is now abolished. The Government officially assumes the role of legislator, while the Chamber and Senate in turn are to offer criticism and advice. . . .

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—MAY 23, 1928.



"THAT BAUBLE."

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI. "WHAT DID MR. CROMWELL SAY IN 1653?"

[The right to give a free vote for a candidate independently chosen by the constituency has been permanently denied to the Italian nation by Signor MUSSOLINI's new Electoral "Reform" Bill.]

30. *Punch* cartoon May 23rd, 1928. The cartoonist expresses his reaction to the new electoral law of May 1928, referred to in Extract 29.

QUESTIONS:

1. Trace the steps by which the institutions of Parliamentary Government were made ineffective under Fascism.
2. What role did the king play during the Fascist era?
3. How do authoritarian governments ensure 95 per cent success for government candidates at elections?
4. Comment on the comparison made by the Punch cartoonist between Oliver Cromwell and Mussolini.

9. The War in Abyssinia

31. *Article by Rome Correspondent of The Times, August 1st, 1935. This article sets out the official reasons for Italy's embarking on the conquest of Abyssinia.*

Describing the 'historical objectives' of Italy in Africa and Asia to the second quinquennial assembly of the leading Fascists, Signor Mussolini said: 'There must be no misunderstanding upon this centuries-old task, which I assign to this and future generations of Italians. There is no question of territorial conquests—this must be understood by all both far and near—but of a natural expansion which ought to lead to a collaboration between Italy and the people of Africa, between Italy and the nations of the Near and Middle East.'

Italy, he went on, could above all civilize Africa, and her position in the Mediterranean gave her this right and imposed this duty on her. 'We do not intend to demand privileges and monopolize, but we do ask and wish to obtain from those who have made good, who are satisfied, who wish to keep their possessions, that they should not take pains to block on all sides the spiritual, political and economic expansion of Fascist Italy.'

These words, uttered as recently as March 18th, 1934, give a measure of the Italian attitude towards the general problem of colonial expansion and at the same time show how long a stretch of road Signor Mussolini has travelled during the last sixteen months in the particular case of Abyssinia. Italy's need for expansion is an old theme which has become increasingly insistent in recent

years. . . . Italy, faced with a rapidly growing population which she is anxious to keep so far as possible under the Italian flag, has long felt stifled within her narrow boundaries. It is calculated that by 1950 or even sooner there will be 50,000,000 Italians living in a country one half the size of France, Spain or Germany, without prime raw materials, prisoners in an enclosed sea, the outlets from which are in the hands of other Powers.

This unfavourable situation has been further aggravated by the recent tendencies of international policy which have led the nations one after the other to raise barriers against commerce, the movement of capital and the flow of emigration. . . .

There are certain students of Italian policy who made up their minds from the outset of the present dispute that Italy was determined to pick a quarrel with Abyssinia at all costs and to conquer the whole country once for all. . . . The nearest approach to an authoritative definition of Signor Mussolini's aims was made in his recent declaration to the *Echo de Paris* when, in reply to M. Kerellis's suggestion that 'You want the uplands, the regions still uninhabited, where the Italian will be able to build his home beside the native on free soil, to plough, to seek again in the earth, to earn his bread, to plant his flag,' Signor Mussolini replied that 'I think for Italy like the great Englishmen who have made the British Empire have thought for England, like the great French colonizers have thought for France. I consider I have answered clearly your question.'

32. *From an article in The Times by a correspondent in Naples in September 1935.*

When Hannibal camped outside the gates of Rome the Romans of Quintus Fabius put up for auction in the Forum the ground occupied by the African enemy. It was, so the historians say, a splendid proof of calm. If it is true as no longer can possibly be doubted, that Signor Mussolini's Italy is on the eve of war against another African enemy, one might believe—judging from appearances—that something of the old Roman spirit still remains in her. All is calm. Nothing betrays the uneasiness, excitement, and activity which presumably should precede a grave and big national event. The holiday season is not in the least disturbed by the threatening clouds which have been gathering on the horizon. Everywhere at

the seaside and on the mountains the people are amusing themselves: everywhere there are exhibitions, fêtes, sports meetings. Those who have remained in the cities lead their tranquil and normal lives. . . .

Signor Mussolini, needless to say, was never so popular as he is today, particularly among the young. The Second Division of the Blackshirts who have been mobilized for service in East Africa, have distributed a decalogue of enthusiasm and boundless devotion. Article 5 says: 'To believe, to obey, to fight: this is a thing soon said, but which in Fascist Italy is also soon done. One believes because he knows that the Duce is never wrong. One obeys because one knows that all orders come from him. One fights because he knows that fighting at his order means victory.' Article 10, too, is worth quoting. It runs: 'At the first crackle of musketry the Blackshirts will see again the powerful figure of the Duce. They will see it thrown against the background of the sky beyond the enemy like a gigantic vision of a warlike dream. At that vision the Blackshirts, terrible and splendid, will smash every resistance, bombs in their hands, daggers between their teeth, and a sovereign contempt for danger in their hearts.' The Blackshirts, naturally, go the more enthusiastically to war, but the morale of the army is also high.

Naples is the only city where one has the impression of war in preparation. It is described as the gate of Africa. The streets are full of soldiers and of Blackshirts come from all parts of the country to embark. They wear cotton khaki uniforms, half-length yellow boots, khaki-covered pith helmets. The volunteers are distinguished by the black trimmings on their khaki. Generally the black shirt has been abandoned because it is feared it may offer an easy target to the enemy. Many of these soldiers and Blackshirts who are leaving are to be seen arm in arm with mothers or sweethearts who have come to Naples to bid them good-bye. . . . As many as fifteen ships at a time, bound for East Africa, are lined along the quays.

For embarkation, the soldiers arrive in military order, well disciplined. They line up along the quays, mount the gangways, and in a short time are all on board. . . . They wave their hands and handkerchiefs and little flags, and shout and sing. Now and again a voice rising above the others cries '*Saluto al Duce*' [Greet the Duce], and thousands of voices answer '*A Noi*' [To us]. Then all repeat in chorus: '*Du-ce, Du-ce, Du-ce*', stressing strongly the '*ce*'. Now and again voices rise above the others: '*A chi l'Abyssinia?*'

[To whom Abyssinia?], and the soldiers' reply comes in chorus 'A Noi'; or 'A chi la gloria?' [To whom the glory?], and the soldiers again: 'To us'. Bands on the quay play the Fascist revolutionary anthems. The soldiers sing old and new war songs. One of them, very popular now, has a refrain which, roughly translated, goes like this:

On old Addis Abeba square,
We will build a gallows there,
To the Negus on the merry-go-round,
We will cry, 'it is ours, your town.'

The bellicose songs are followed by great 'evvivas', and by shouts of greetings to the parents and friends who have remained on the quays. From below the women throw up flowers. The soldiers and Blackshirts catch them, and, having kissed them, make garlands of them.

33. *Peasant Reaction to the Abyssinian War from Christ Stopped at Eboli by Carlo Levi. Carlo Levi, a painter, doctor and writer, was banished to the village of Gagliano in Southern Italy for his opposition to the Fascist régime and wrote an account of his experiences there, from which this extract is taken. ('Don Luigi' referred to was the local Fascist schoolmaster.)*

The peasants were not interested in the war. . . . War they considered just another inevitable misfortune, like the tax on goats. They were not afraid to go: 'To live like dogs here or to die like dogs there is just the same', they said. But no one, except Donna Caterina's husband, enlisted. It soon became clear that not only the purpose of the war, but the way it was being conducted as well, was the business of that other Italy beyond the mountains, and had little to do with the peasants. Only a few men were called up, two or three in the whole village, besides those who had reached age for military service. . . . A few of the very poor peasants, who had neither land of their own nor food to eat, were attracted by Don Luigi's speeches and the promise of high wages. They applied for manual labour as civilians but never received an answer. 'They don't even want us to work. The war is for the benefit of those in the North. We're to stay at home until we starve. And now there's no chance of going to America.'

October 3rd, which marked the official opening of the war, was a miserable sort of day. Twenty or twenty-five peasants, roped in by

the Carabinieri and the Fascist scouts, stood woodenly in the square to listen to the historical pronouncements that came over the radio. Don Luigi had ordered flags displayed over the town hall, the school, and the houses of the well-to-do; their bright colours waving in the breeze made a strange contrast to the black death-pennants on the doors of the peasants' huts. The bell-ringer rang out the usual funeral strains, and the war so lightheartedly set in motion in Rome was greeted in Gagliano with stony indifference. Don Luigi spoke from the balcony of the town hall. He enlarged upon the eternal grandeur of Rome, the seven hills, the wolf that suckled Romulus and Remus, Caesar's legions, Roman civilization, and the Roman Empire which was about to be revived. He said that the world hated us for our greatness, but that the enemies of Rome would bite the dust and then we would once more triumphantly tread the Roman roads, because Rome was everlasting and invincible. In his falsetto voice he said a great many more things about Rome which I no longer remember, then he opened his mouth and started to sing *Giovinezza*, motioning imperiously with his hands to the school children in the square below to accompany him in chorus. Around him on the balcony were the sergeant and everyone of importance; all of them sang except Dr. Milillo, who did not share the enthusiasm. Huddled against the wall below, the peasants listened in silence, shielding their eyes with their hands from the sun and looking, in their black suits, as dark and gloomy as bats.



34. *Punch* cartoon May 13th, 1936. The cartoonist expresses his reaction to the proclamation of King Victor Emmanuel as 'Emperor of Abyssinia' on May 9th, 1936.

QUESTIONS:

1. Trace the steps by which, from 1884 to 1936, Italy built up an empire in Africa.
2. Compare the official reasons with the real reasons for Italy's attack on Abyssinia.
3. Why was Italy successful in defying the League of Nations over her invasion of Abyssinia?
4. Explain why the conquest of Abyssinia was such a triumph for Mussolini and enhanced his popularity in Italy.

10. The Italo-German Alliance

35. *The Shaping of the Axis. From Ciano's Diplomatic Papers. Conversation between the Duce and Herr Frank, September 23rd, 1936. Herr Frank was German Minister without Portfolio. The diplomatic isolation of Italy in the Abyssinian war paved the way for a common front between Italy and Nazi Germany, and the path had been made smoother by the settlement of differences between Germany and Austria in July 1936 (Italy was very sensitive on the question of Austrian independence) and by a community of feeling and approach over the Spanish Civil War, which had now begun.*

Frank declares . . . as far as Geneva is concerned it is the Fuehrer's intention to keep step with the Fascist government, and Herr Frank adds that Germany is ready to grant recognition to the Abyssinian Empire whenever it is considered advisable.

Herr Frank concluded by expressing his own belief and that of the Reich Government in the need for increasingly close collaboration between Germany and Italy.

The Duce answers that we in Italy are in no hurry to see the Abyssinian Empire recognized; that is a matter for the other powers rather than us. He appreciates, however, the German Government's intentions. . . .

As regards Geneva, Italy has for all practical purposes left it. . . .

He is happy to note how much relations between Austria and Germany have improved.

As far as France is concerned he states that, with the present internal political conditions in that country, it is not possible for us to develop any common policy with it.

France is sick and old. It thinks only of eating; it is a country in which the cuisine has become 'an art of the State'. Its demographic decadence is terrifying. In France the population falls by two thousand every week. . . .

Our actions in Spain are an effective proof of our participation in the anti-Bolshevik struggle. . . .

Our relations with London are very bad and cannot improve. Every British measure provokes a counter-measure by us. When the English sent the fleet to Alexandria, the Duce sent five divisions to the borders of Cyrenaica. Now that the English are preparing new naval bases, we are preparing opposing bases. Mastery of the air in the Mediterranean is, and always will be Italy's

As far as the colonies are concerned, the Duce considers that the Germans are right to raise the question and agitate about it. The Germans, like the Italians, are a people without living space. At the opportune moment, Italy undertakes to support them.

36. *German-Italian Pact of Steel, May 22nd, 1939. In November, 1937 Italy and Germany had signed the Anti-Comintern Pact—they were to 'Stand side by side against the threat of Bolshevism.' Mussolini agreed to turn this into a military alliance because he needed German support in his quarrel with France—he was claiming Nice, Corsica and Tunis.*

I

The high contracting parties will remain permanently in contact with one another in order to agree on all questions affecting their own interests on the European situation as a whole.

II

Should the common interests of the high contracting parties be endangered through international events of any sort they will immediately enter into consultations with one another in order to take measures to protect those interests.

III

Should the security or other vital interests of one of the contracting parties be threatened from outside the other contracting party will afford the threatened party its full political and diplomatic support. . . . If it should happen . . . that one of them becomes involved in warlike complications with another Power or with other Powers the other contracting party will come to its aid as an ally. . . . (Articles IV, V and VI deal with intensification of military and economic

co-operation, the undertaking to make no separate peace in the event of war, and the importance of maintaining close relations with Hungary, Japan and Manchukuo, partners in the Anti-Comintern pact).

VII

The pact comes into force immediately upon being signed. The two contracting parties agree to fix the first period of its validity at ten years. . . . (A secret protocol provided for arrangements to be set on foot for the setting up of commissions on military questions and questions of war economy.)

37. *From Ciano's Diplomatic Papers: Conversation between the Duce and the Fuehrer in the presence of Count Ciano and Von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister. The meeting took place in the private coach of Mussolini's train at the Brenner Pass on March 18th, 1940.*

The Duce stated that it is with great pleasure that he takes part in this conversation with the Fuehrer. He is convinced that it was impossible for Germany to postpone the war with Poland any longer. A further postponement—admitting that it had been possible to obtain one for some years—would only have complicated matters. If on September 1st he had made military demonstrations, Italy would certainly have been involved in the conflict. The Duce then explained in detail in what a difficult situation Italy would have found herself if she had gone to war last autumn. He himself had deeply felt the limitations which he had had to impose. Now, however, the Fascist Government and the Party feel that it is impossible to remain neutral until the end of the war. A modification of Italy's attitude to France and England is to be excluded. Therefore Italy's entry into the war is inevitable. Italy intends to march alongside Germany, not in order to give her military aid—as he saw it Germany had no need of such help either in Poland or now on the Western front—but because the honour and the interests of Italy demand her intervention in the war.

The Duce then went on to the question of the timing of that intervention. He described in detail Italy's military situation, the ever growing power of her war potential and the excellent morale of the troops. The financial situation, however, would not allow her to wage a war of long duration. The Duce regards with favour the rapprochement between Germany and Russia, which spares

Germany from a war on two fronts. He, too, believes that a danger of Bolshevik contagion does not exist. . . .

Speaking of collaboration between Germany and Italy, the Duce repeated that as soon as Germany has by her military operations created what the Fuehrer describes as a favourable situation, he would lose no time in intervening. Should the German advance develop with a slower tempo, the Duce would wait until the moment when his intervention at the decisive hour could be of real use to Germany.

QUESTIONS:

1. What part did Italy play in the Spanish Civil War?
2. In what ways did Italy give support to Germany over the German occupation of Austria in 1938, of the Sudetenland in 1938?
3. What had been Italy's policy between September 1939 and March 1940 and why had she not entered the war on the side of Germany at its outbreak?

11. The Second World War

38. *From Speech by Mussolini to the Party Directorate, January 3, 1943.*

Who is going to win this war? You will say the best armed people. That is not enough. The people with the largest supplies of raw materials? Still not enough. The people with the greatest generals? Not even this. This war will be won by the armed forces with the deepest political understanding. The days have gone by in which it was said that the soldier must not be a politician; no, that is a mistake. This could be said at the time when there were ten or fifteen parties. You could not allow ten or fifteen different kinds of political propaganda in barracks. But now there is only one party and one régime, consequently the armed forces can never be too political or too strongly Fascist. If they are not political we cannot win. We need Fascist soldiers to fight for Fascism because this is a war of religion and of ideas. . . .

. . . I have always regarded it as more important to occupy Egypt than to occupy England. If England were occupied, the problem would not be solved; but once the hinge of three continents constituted by Egypt had been occupied, and we had come

down to the Indian Ocean, and had made contact with the Japanese we should have broken the back of British Imperialism. This has not happened. . . .

We are therefore privileged to foresee that an enemy attack will be directed particularly against Italy. Why? Because it is thought that Italy is the weaker of the two allies, but particularly because the enemy counts on our failure of morale. . . .

I do not believe that they [the Allies] will try to open a land front against us. It is too late; we have already taken our measures. . . .

At the present moment we have transformed the Italian people if not altogether, at least in part; this was the supreme task of our revolution. . . . This year will decide whether the Italian people must resign itself to being a land of tourists, a large Switzerland. . . .

39. *Memorandum of Italian High Command to Duce July 14th, 1943.*

The fate of Sicily can be regarded as sealed with a more or less brief delay. The essential reasons for the rapid collapse are: the absolute lack of naval opposition and feeble resistance in the air during the approach to the coast, the landing, the advance of the enemy, and our counter-offensive reactions; the inadequacy of equipment and grouping of our coastal divisions; the scarcity and weakness of defensive works; and the lack of efficiency, in weapons and mobility, of the main Italian force.

It is useless to search for the causes of this state of affairs. They are the results of three years of war, begun with scanty means, and during which the few resources have been burned up in Africa, in Russia, and in the Balkans. The same serious situation exists in Sardinia, in Corsica, and in the whole peninsula. Once Sicily had been occupied, the enemy could operate, either against the Italian mainland methodically in a series of operations within the range of fighter aircraft from North to South, or strike a single blow aimed at dividing the peninsula in two, or in Sardinia and Corsica as a preliminary operation to one against the peninsula or the coast of Provence. . . .

[The defence of the Italian mainland requires] immense quantities of equipment and of land and air forces, which we are not capable of getting ready ourselves. One must however consider the need to organize the flow into Italy of German land and air forces (motorized units other than those already arrived, and 2,000 air-

craft), even at the cost of interrupting temporarily operations in progress in the East in order to defend Italy, and reconquer a relative air superiority in the central Mediterranean. . . .

It is urgent to break from the outset the attempt to create a stable Second Front on which, in a more or less brief space of time, the Anglo-Americans will succeed in having an absolute superiority . . .

If one cannot prevent the setting up of such a front, it will be up to the highest political authorities to consider whether it would not be expedient to spare the country further sorrow and ruin, and to anticipate the end of the struggle, seeing that the final result will undoubtedly be worse in one or two more years.

40. *Conversation between two wounded Italian soldiers in front of El Alamein in October 1942, overheard by Doctor Parvis of the 34th Brescia Medical Section, and recounted by Count Sillavengo in his war memoirs.*

‘The big mistake,’ said a Sicilian voice, ‘was to let the war be run by a Bersaglieri corporal dressed up as a Field-Marshal and surrounded by a staff of yes-men!’

‘And what would you have done then?’ demanded a Milanese.

‘I’ll tell you,’ said the Sicilian. ‘I’d have got hold of a businessman from Milan—that’s up in your part of the world—and I’d have said: “Look Mr. Ambrogio Brambilla, the nation has awarded you the contract for running the war. We’ll give you three million lire a day; all right? Get on with it!”’

‘Wait a bit! Who is this Brambilla character? There are ten pages of Brambillas in our telephone directory; there’ll be at least two columns of Ambrogios—and you can bet your boots that half of them are business men. Which of them do you want?’

‘Pick one at random,’ said the Sicilian with an air of finality. ‘Any single one of ’em would be better than the bloke who’s running things at the moment!’

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Italy join in the war and what did she hope to get out of it?
2. Trace the way in which Italy became more and more dependent on Germany between 1941 and the Italian surrender in 1943.
3. Why was Italy so unsuccessful in her conduct of the war?
4. Trace the exploits of the Italian Army in North Africa between 1940 and 1943.

12. The Fall of Mussolini and of the Fascist Régime

41. *The Motion of Count Grandi presented to The Fascist Grand Council, July 25th, 1943. This motion was passed, at the end of a ten hour meeting, by a majority of nineteen to four, with one abstention. Mussolini is alleged, according to his own account, to have said of the carrying of the motion: 'You have provoked the crisis of the régime.'*

The Grand Council, meeting at this time of great hazard, turns its thought first of all to the heroic warriors of every Service, who, shoulder to shoulder with the proud people of Sicily, in whom the unanimous faith of the Italian people shines at its brightest, are renewing the noble traditions of hardy valour and undaunted spirit of self sacrifice of our glorious Armed Forces.

Having examined the internal and international situation and the political and military conduct of the war,

It proclaims the duty of all Italians to defend at all costs the unity, independence and liberty of the Motherland, the fruits of the sacrifice and labour of four generations, from the Risorgimento down to today, and the life and future of the Italian people.

It affirms the necessity for the moral and material unity of all Italians in this grave and decisive hour for the destiny of our country.

It declares for this purpose the immediate restoration of all State functions, allotting to the King, the Grand Council, the Government, Parliament and the Corporations, the tasks and responsibilities laid down by our statutory and constitutional laws.

It invites the Head of the Government to request His Majesty the King—towards whom the heart of all the nation turn with faith and confidence—that he may be pleased, for the honour and salvation of the nation, to assume together with the effective command of the Armed Forces on land, sea and in the air, according to Article 5 of the Statute of the Realm, that supreme

initiative of decision which our institutions attribute to him and which, in all our national history, has always been the glorious heritage of our august dynasty of Savoy.

42. *Mussolini's interview with King Victor Emmanuel at Villa Savoia on July 25th, 1943 and his arrest. The following account of the final interview between Mussolini and the King is given by Mussolini himself in his Memoirs 1942-43.*

Punctually at 5 p.m. the car entered the gates of the Villa Savoia which had been thrown open. Everywhere within there were reinforcements of Carabinieri, but that did not seem out of the ordinary. The King, in Marshal's uniform, stood in the doorway of the villa. Two officers were stationed in the hall inside. When we had entered the drawing-room, the King, in a state of abnormal agitation, and with his features distorted, said, clipping his words:

'My dear Duce, it's no longer any good. Italy has gone to bits. Army morale is at rock bottom. The soldiers don't want to fight any more. The Alpine regiments are singing a song which says they don't want to make war on Mussolini's account any longer.' [The King repeated the verses of the song in Piedmontese dialect]. 'The Grand Council's vote is terrific—nineteen votes for Grandi's motion and among them four holders of the Order of the Annunciation. You can certainly be under no illusion as to Italy's feelings with regard to yourself. At this moment you are the most hated man in Italy. You can no longer count on more than one friend. You have one friend left you and I am he. That is why I tell you you need have no fears for your personal safety, for which I will ensure protection. I have been thinking the man for the job now is Marshal Badoglio. He will start by forming a government of experts for purely administrative purposes and for the continuation of the war. In six months' time we shall see. All Rome knows about the Grand Council's resolution, and they are all expecting a change.'

I replied: 'You are taking an extremely grave decision. A crisis at the moment would mean making the people think that peace was in sight, once the man who had declared war had been dismissed. The blow to the Army's morale would be serious. If the soldiers, Alpine or not, don't want to make war for Mussolini any more, that doesn't matter, so long as they are prepared to do

it for you. The crisis would be considered a triumph for the Churchill-Stalin set-up, especially for the latter, who would see the retirement of an antagonist who had fought against him for twenty years. I realize the people's hatred. I had no difficulty in recognizing it last night in the midst of the Grand Council. One can't govern for such a long time and impose so many sacrifices without provoking resentments more or less temporary or permanent. In any case, I wish good luck to the man who takes the situation in hand.'

It was exactly 5.20 p.m. when the King accompanied me to the door. His face was livid and he looked almost dwarfish. He shook my hand and went in again. I descended the steps and went towards my car.

Suddenly a Carabinieri captain stopped me and said: 'His Majesty has charged me with the protection of your person.' I was continuing towards my car when the captain said to me, pointing to a motor ambulance standing near by: 'No. We must get in there.'

I got into the ambulance, together with my secretary, de Cesare. A lieutenant, three Carabinieri and two police agents in plain clothes got in as well as the captain and placed themselves by the door armed with machine-guns. When the door was closed the ambulance drove off at top speed. I still thought that all this was being done, as the King had said, in order to protect my person.

43. *Hitler's Summary of the Situation, July 26th, 1943, to his Military Advisers.*

The developments I feared, and which I hinted at during the general conference recently, have taken place. It is a revolt instigated by the Royal House and by Marshal Badoglio, that is, by our old enemies. The Duce was arrested yesterday. He was summoned to the Quirinal for conferences, then was arrested inside, and was then abruptly dismissed by this decree. Then this new government was formed, which, of course, officially still declares that it will co-operate with us. Of course this is only camouflage to gain a few days' time in which to consolidate the new régime. With the exception of Jews and riff-raff who are causing a commotion in Rome, there is no one behind the new régime, that is evident. But at the moment they are in, and it is

absolutely imperative for us to act. I have always feared this development. . . . I am firmly determined to strike here with lightning speed. . . . I would estimate the Italian resistance as nil. The Fascists will come over to us. Incidentally, we brought Farinacci* over; he is with us. He is already in Munich on his way here. I don't know where the Duce himself is. As soon as I find out, I will have him brought over by parachutists. In my opinion that whole government is a typical putsch government, like that in Belgrade, and one day it will collapse, provided that we act immediately . . .'

44. *From a Confidential Report from the Office of the German Foreign Minister, August 13th, 1943.*

. . . The crisis of July 25th undoubtedly has its origins in happenings of the already distant past. Grave signs of internal decay, especially corruption, the lack of a clear lead and above all the presence of totally unqualified persons in leading positions, had already long discredited the edifice of the Fascist régime in the eyes of the entire nation. . . . Nevertheless, outright revolution seemed hardly feasible, for at no time had determined opposition to the Duce in fact existed, either in the Party, the Army or the nation at large.

As Italy's predicament grew steadily graver under the pressure of military events in Sicily, an attempt was made in leading Fascist circles to persuade the Duce to abdicate certain of his powers. . . . But the Duce flatly rejected all the warnings, counsels and suggestions so repeatedly proffered of late.

In the grave crisis which has befallen Italy, a very significant, if not decisive, part has been played by two factors: on the one hand, by the Duce's long-standing and insidious ailment; . . . and on the other hand by his inadequacy as a military leader. . . . In the days immediately preceding July 25th, the Duce had finally yielded to the instances of leading Party members and convened the Grand Fascist Council for July 24th. . . . The course of this extremely stormy session, which lasted for ten hours without a break, can be regarded as largely known and explained. The majority agree that it was only Grandi and Ciano who were methodically and consciously working towards the Duce's overthrow. . . . It cannot, however, be doubted that the leadership of the Fascist

* Ex-secretary of the Fascist Party and influential party boss.

Party completely broke down and that practically no one was loyal to the Duce at the last. . . .

When during the night of July 25th not merely the public but even the best informed quarters learned to their astonishment of the deposition of the Duce and the assumption of power by Marshal Badoglio, unedifying scenes occurred in Rome. In the course of a single night, thirty-one Party headquarters in Rome were stormed by the multitude and their furniture smashed and set alight. Fascist emblems everywhere were destroyed.

. . . A strict curfew from 9.30 p.m. was imposed; all key points in the city were occupied by the military. The police received orders to shoot at sight. . . .

In Northern Italy events took a far more serious turn. The demonstrations in Turin, Milan, Genoa and Bologna were explicitly Communist in character. The Government took very forceful action everywhere, and for the time being the situation is in hand. . . .

The process of liquidating the Fascist régime is going ahead very methodically. But . . . the process of spiritual fermentation set up by Fascism cannot of course be expected, after twenty years, to vanish from one day to the next. . . .

QUESTIONS:

1. Trace the careers of Ciano and Grandi from the earlier days of Fascism to 1943.
2. Why did the overthrow of the Fascist régime prove so easy?
3. Hitler spoke of intervening in Italy, after Mussolini's fall, 'with lightning speed'. What measures did he in fact take and with what success?

13. The Salò Republic—Epilogue to Fascism

45. *Extract from the Broadcast by Mussolini from Munich, September 18th, 1943. Mussolini, who had been rescued by German parachutists from his imprisonment on the Gran Sasso on September 11th, 1943, made his first broadcast after his liberation from Munich. On September 23rd he was flown back to Italy and on October 10th taken*

to Gargagno on Lake Garda, near where, at Salò, was to be the Headquarters of his new Government, set up under the protection of the occupying German Forces.

After a long silence my voice reaches you again. . . .

The State which we wish to set up will be national and social in the highest sense of the word: that is it will be Fascist, thus going back to our origins. While waiting for the movement to develop until it becomes irresistible, our postulates are the following: to take up arms alongside Germany, Japan and the other allies; only blood can cancel such a shameful page from the history of the Fatherland; to set about reorganizing our armed forces around the Militia formations without delay. . . .; to eliminate the traitors and in particular those who up to 9.30 on the evening of July 25th had been active—some for years—in the ranks of the Party and who had gone over to the ranks of the enemy; to annihilate the parasitic plutocracies and at last to make labour the theme of our economy and the indestructible basis of the State. . . .

46. *Hitler's Comment to his Advisers on Plans for an Italian army, December 19th, 1943.*

The Fuehrer said he does not believe anything will come of it. Germany is no longer interested in an Italian army because her relations with Italy are too strained as a result of the events of last September and are bound to remain so. The organizing of Italian military units would therefore demand the greatest caution and watchfulness.

47. *Action against the 'traitors of July 25th' on January 11th, 1944. From a German Report of the Execution of Ciano and four others. At the insistence of Hitler, members of the Fascist Grand Council who had voted for Grandi's motion were tried by a special tribunal, set up by the Republic of Salò, and, with one exception, sentenced to death. All but five were tried and sentenced in absentia.*

I accompanied the Chief of Province and his retinue in the prisoners' vehicle to the scene of the execution, a shooting range in the Forte San Procolo, a suburb of Verona. I should note that on arriving at the prison the Prefect had asked me whether I would be present at the execution, and I confirmed this.

The firing squad consisted of a detachment of militia some twenty-five men strong. The execution took place in the following manner. The criminals were made to sit back to front on a chair, i.e. with the back of the chair facing forwards so that their own backs were exposed to the firing squads. Their hands were tied to the back of the chair. In the case of Marshal De Bono, who was furthest away from where I was standing, I gathered from his head-shakings and reluctance that he was refusing to be bound and only agreed to it after some persuasion. The only prisoner who caused trouble again was Marinelli, who had to be bound by force by several people and shrieked and moaned the whole time. The others maintained a calm demeanour. The firing squads took up their positions in two rows fifteen paces behind the prisoners, their small Italian rifles loaded and at the ready. At the word of command the men simultaneously opened fire on the five prisoners, the front row from a kneeling, the back row from a standing position. Just before the order to fire was given one of the condemned men . . . shouted: 'Long live Italy! Long live the Duce!' After the first salvo four of the prisoners fell to the ground, taking their chairs with them, while one remained sitting on his chair quite unaffected, to judge from his posture. From the distance at which I was standing I could not make out whether he had been kept erect by sheer equilibrium or whether he had not been hit at all.

The men lying on the ground had been so inaccurately hit that they were writhing and screaming. After a short embarrassed pause a few more shots were fired from the ranks of the firing-squad at the man still on the chair and the others on the ground. Finally the cease-fire was given, and the men were finished off with pistols by the commander of the squad and a few other militiamen.

When Ciano's death and that of the other prisoners had been confirmed, I left the place of execution. Apart from the Chief of Province, his officials and the members of the Special Tribunal, the execution was witnessed by several militia officers, a number of civilians who were unknown to me and a few German anti-aircraft troops. The progress of the execution was filmed by a militia officer apparently attached to some propaganda unit.

48. *Memorandum by General Graziani to Mussolini, June 27th, 1944. Marshal Graziani, head of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Salò*

had been requested by Mussolini to co-ordinate the action against the Italian partisan movement which was operating with growing success against the Germans and Mussolini's government.

On June 25th the Duce . . . instructed me to co-ordinate the activities of the various Armed Forces . . . in order to decapitate the rebellion of the outlaws. . . . I think it is necessary to diagnose the causes of the present situation. . . .

The principal causes of the present grave politico-military malaise in Italy, which daily assumes all the aspects of a real wasting disease . . . can thus be summarized:

(1) The military situation in the various military theatres, particularly the Italian.

The Italian masses are convinced that Germany has lost the war, and that the efforts of their soldiers . . . serve no purpose. There is also much scepticism as to the efficacy of the new secret weapons. . . .

(2) The spread of Communism. . . .

(3) Distrust of Fascism. . . .

(4) German Occupation.

. . . Everyone is convinced that the Government counts for nothing, and that the Germans are the real masters. . . .

(5) Recruiting of man-power for Germany.

The sending of men to Germany is the most unpopular aspect of life in Italy today. . . . The mass of young people prefer to take to the maquis . . . rather than go to Germany. . . .

(6) The failure to reconstruct the Republican Armed Forces.

Is the Army a reality or an illusion? . . . We have called up 400,000 men to the armed forces and as civilian labour, and we have been able to send to the front only four battalions of volunteers . . . and two SS units. Naval and air co-operation has been derisory. . . .

(7) The Phenomenon of Rebellion.

In practice the government of the Italian Social Republic controls, and that only up to a point, the stretch of plain astride both banks of the Po. All the rest is in the hands of the so-called rebels, who are supported by large sections of the population. . . .

49. *My Last Meeting with Mussolini on April 25th, 1945 by Cardinal Ildefonso Schuster, Archbishop of Milan. Cardinal Schuster was acting as intermediary between the Allied Command and the German*

forces in Italy, and was on April 25th, 1945, in process of negotiating a surrender of the latter to the former. Mussolini had asked Cardinal Schuster to arrange a meeting between him and the leaders of the Italian Resistance movement, and this conversation took place during the interview which had been requested.

He [Mussolini] entered the reception room with such a dejected look that the impression he gave me was that of a man benumbed by an immense catastrophe. I received him with episcopal charity, and, while waiting for the arrival of the persons he had wanted to meet, I tried to cheer him a little by starting a conversation. . . . I begged him to spare Italy useless havoc and to accept the honourable surrender which was offered him. He answered that his programme was twofold and would be carried out in two moves. The Army and the Republican militia would be dissolved. He himself would retire into the Valtellina with an escort of some thousands of Blackshirts. 'So,' I asked, 'you intend to continue the war in the mountains?' The Duce assured me: 'Only for a short time; then I shall surrender.' I ventured to remark: 'Duce, do not have any illusions. I know that the Blackshirts who are going to follow you are rather three hundred than three thousand, as some would have you believe.' He answered: 'Perhaps a few more; not many though. I have no illusions.' Seeing him resolute in his determination, I did not reply. Our conversation continued with a sense of tiredness. The Duce was like a man bereft of will, listlessly facing his destiny. . . .

The entry of the representatives of the two belligerent parties broke up our conversation. . . .

At first the two parties faced each other very stiffly but soon the discussion became animated, and the liberation committee, while requiring from Mussolini simply an unconditional surrender, pledged themselves to respect the following conditions:

(1) The Fascist Army and Militia, and all the armed groups attached to them, were to surrender their arms, and be taken prisoner with military honours, in accordance with the rules of the Hague Convention; (2) the families of Fascists were not to be victimized; (3) diplomats were to be treated in accordance with international law.

These conditions seemed to satisfy the Duce. . . .

At this moment Marshal Graziani rose and told Mussolini that he had no right to agree a capitulation independently of the Germans, if they did not want to repeat the betrayal of September

8th. There was a moment of surprise. Then some of those present remarked that the German authorities, through myself, had already started negotiations. . . . Mussolini gave way to a sudden impulse of indignation, declared himself to have been betrayed by the Germans, who had always treated us as their servants. He threatened to resume his freedom of action. . . .

At length the Duce asked the committee for an hour's time to make up his mind, and they granted it to him. . . .

An hour and a quarter later, they insisted on ringing up Mussolini, so that he might either give his decision or be present for the surrender. To our surprise we were told that the Duce had left Milan after ordering a negative reply to be given.

50. *Extract from the Political Testament of Hitler.*

Judging events coldly, leaving aside all sentimentality, I have to admit that my unyielding friendship for Italy, and for the Duce, could be added to the list of my mistakes. It is visible that the Italian alliance rendered more service to the enemy than to ourselves. The intervention of Italy will only have brought us an infinitesimal aid in comparison with the numerous difficulties which it has created for us. It will have contributed, if we do not win in spite of everything, to making us lose the war. The greatest service which Italy could have done to us was to have kept out of the conflict. . . . Her intervention in June 1940, to give the final kick to the French Army in disintegration, had the sole effect of tarnishing our victory which those who had been defeated had by then accepted in a sporting manner. France recognized that she had been beaten fairly by the armies of the Reich, but did not want to be defeated by the Axis.

Our Italian ally has embarrassed us everywhere. In North Africa, for example, we were prevented from following a revolutionary policy. By the nature of things, this living space became an Italian monopoly and as such was claimed by the Duce. Only we could have emancipated the Moslem countries dominated by France. This would have had enormous repercussions in Egypt and the Middle East, both enslaved by the British. By linking our fate with that of the Italians, such a policy was made impossible.

From the military point of view, things were hardly better. Italy's entry into the war at once gave our adversaries their first victories. . . . Although incapable of holding out in Abyssinia and

Cyrenaica, the Italians had the nerve, without asking our advice and even without warning us, to launch into an absolutely useless campaign in Greece. Their dishonourable setbacks aroused the ill-humour of certain Balkan states in regard to us. It was here and nowhere else that the causes must be sought of the stiffening and then *volte-face* of the Yugo-Slavs in the spring of 1941. This led us, contrary to all plans, to intervene in the Balkans, whence the catastrophic delay in unleashing the war against Russia. . . . If the war had remained one conducted by Germany, and not by the Axis, we would have been able to attack Russia as from May 15th, 1941. . . .

My attachment to the person of the Duce has not changed . . . but I regret not having listened to reason which imposed on me a brutal friendship in regard to Italy. . . .

QUESTIONS:

1. Was the Republic of Salò an episode which further lowered Mussolini's reputation or did it do something to restore it?
2. In what ways did the Germans think that the Republic of Salò could be useful to them?
3. What did Hitler mean by the term 'a brutal friendship'?
4. What contribution did *non-Fascist* Italian forces make to the Allied victory in Italy between September 1943 and April 1945?

Sources of Extracts

- 1 Herman Finer, *Mussolini's Italy* (Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1965), p. 116
- 2 Finer, p. 140
- 3 Ivone Kirkpatrick, *Mussolini* (Odhams, 1964), p. 142
- 4 Herbert W. Schneider, *Making the Fascist State* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1928), p. 351
- 5 Schneider, p. 357.
- 6 Hans Kohn, ed., *The Modern World* (Macmillan, New York, 1963), pp. 199-203
- 7 Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years* (Muller, 1957), pp. 33-35
- 8 Kirkpatrick, p. 185
- 9 *The Times*, August 19th, 1924
- 10 *The Times*, January 5th, 1925 (also Christopher Hibbert, *Benito Mussolini*, Penguin Books, 1962, p. 67)
- 11 Finer, p. 329
- 12 Finer, p. 379
- 13 Finer, pp. 400-401
- 14 Finer, p. 408
- 15 Finer, p. 410
- 16 Finer, p. 416
- 17 Finer, p. 442
- 18 Finer, p. 443
- 19 Finer, pp. 501-2
- 20 *The Times*, May 25th, 1934
- 21 *The Times*, December 27th, 1934
- 22 *The Times*, October 29th, 1928
- 23 Reuter (quoted Catholic Truth Society pamphlet, *The Lateran Treaties*, 1929)
- 24 Catholic Truth Society pamphlet on Encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, 1934
- 25 Kirkpatrick, p. 181
- 26 *The Times*, August 24th, 1928
- 27 Cicely Hamilton, *Modern Italy* (Dent, 1932), pp. 208-9
- 28 Hamilton, pp. 217-18
- 29 *The Times*, March 28th, 1939
- 30 *Punch*, May 23rd, 1928

SOURCES OF EXTRACTS

- 31 *The Times*, August 1st, 1935
- 32 *The Times*, September 5th, 1935
- 33 Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (Cassell, 1948), pp. 133-4
- 34 *Punch*, May 13th, 1936
- 35 Malcolm Muggeridge, ed., *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, (Odhams, 1948), pp. 44-7
- 36 Elizabeth Wiskemann, *The Rome-Berlin Axis* (Collins, 1966 ed.) pp. 413-15
- 37 Muggeridge, pp. 364-5
- 38 F. W. Deakin, *The Brutal Friendship* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), pp. 131-2
- 39 Deakin, pp. 374-5
- 40 P. Caccia-Dominioni, *Alamein 1933-62* (Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. 203
- 41 Deakin, p. 455
- 42 R. Klibansky, ed., *Mussolini's Memoirs, 1942-3* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1949), pp. 80-82
- 43 Deakin, p. 493
- 44 Deakin, p. 519
- 45 Deakin, p. 565
- 46 Deakin, p. 606
- 47 Deakin, pp. 644-5
- 48 Deakin, pp. 697-9
- 49 Klibansky, pp. 254-60
- 50 Deakin, pp. 799-800

PB
746

PB 746



A "SIEGE PERILOUS."

THE VOLCANO (to Signor MUSSOLINI, who is trying to suppress its activities). "THIS WILL HURT YOU MORE THAN IT HURTS ME."

This cartoon reflects the reaction of a liberally-minded English public to the suppression of civil liberties in Italy, which followed Mussolini's speech on 3 January 1925 in the Chamber of Deputies (see Extract 10).

QUESTION: How correct was the cartoonist in his prophecy?



FASCISMO, LIMITED.

THE NATIVE (to *Signor Mussolini*). "YOU CAN DRAG A CHAMOIS TO THE MACARONI, BUT YOU CAN'T MAKE HIM EAT IT."

This cartoon refers to Mussolini's efforts to turn the 200,000 German Austrians in the South Tyrol (transferred to Italy by the Peace Treaty of 1919) into good Italians and supporters of Fascism. The German-speaking Tyrolese resented being forced to lose their cultural identity, and Fascism was not tolerant of minorities. The later friendship between Mussolini and Hitler failed to resolve this problem.

QUESTION: Compare the way the present Italian government handle this minority problem with the way in which it was handled by the Fascist government.

**A16696**

- 13 -

raguardi soprattutto dell'Inghilterra e della Francia, ma che il fermo proponimento del Governo italiano è di non permettere che a questi Trattati venga data una interpretazione che nel momento presente gioverebbe soltanto a coprire la preparazione militare etiopica e ad evitare che l'Italia possa raggiungere quei limiti di sicurezza ai quali essa ha, al pari degli altri Stati, diritto per poter portare alla sicurezza collettiva europea tutto il peso e la forza della propria collaborazione.

Come vede l'E.V. le considerazioni del Governo britannico che Ella mi invita ancora una volta a ponderare, erano state già da me ampiamente tenute presenti fino dalla mia prima risposta al signor Eden.

V.E. non vorrà infatti supporre che, responsabile come sono delle tutela degli interessi italiani e dell'azione internazionale dell'Italia io abbia potuto intraprendere senza la necessaria matura ponderazione l'azione a cui l'Italia si è venuta a trovare per l'aggressione di Ualual che - una volta di più - avrebbe dovuto aprire a tutti chiaramente gli occhi sullo stato delle cose in Etiopia, ponendo un problema che l'Italia è decisa a risolvere una volta per tutte.

Gradisca, Signor Ambasciatore, gli atti della mia più alta considerazione.

31 LUG. 1935 Anno XIII